

# STREET & SMITH'S **LOVE STORY** \*

EVERY WEEK **MAGAZINE**  
ILLUSTRATED

APR. 11, 1931

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CRIMSON  
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April 11

★

STREET &  
SMITH'S

**LOVE STORY MAGAZINE**

15¢

# Show You a Quick Way to Get Money to I'll Pay Your Bills



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If you will look after my business in your locality. No experience needed. Pleasant, easier work, can be handled in spare time or full time. Work pays good money by hour or week.

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## Money Comes Quick

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to get as much as you need. I send you a plan by which you either make \$15 cash the very first day you work for me, or else I pay you cash for the time it took you to try.

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Doesn't make any difference about your age or whether you are a man or woman. Both have made lots of money with me. All that I ask is that you will be honest with me with the merchandise I send you—that you be ambitious enough to deliver the little message I send to people in your locality and mail me their trial orders. The products are high grade everyday necessities—used in every home—such as teas, spices, extracts, groceries—things people must have to live.

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**Big Money in Spare Time**  
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Vol. LXXX

EVERY WEEK

Number 3

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**"A Flapper At Heart," by Marjorie Gleyre! Out Next Week! A story of a flapper's troubles with a boy friend who liked long skirts.**

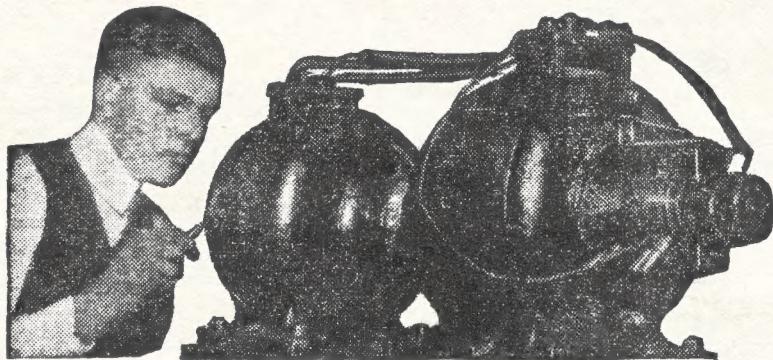
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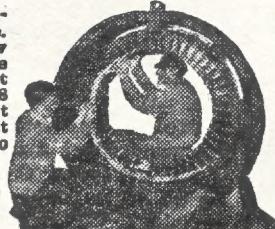
### **EARN WHILE YOU LEARN**

If you should need part-time work while at school to help pay expenses, I'll assist you to it. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained . . . on a gigantic outlay of electrical apparatus . . . costing hundreds of thousands of dollars . . . real dynamos, engines, power plants, astros, switchboards, transmitting stations . . . everything from doorbells to farm power and lighting . . . full-sized . . . in full operation every day!

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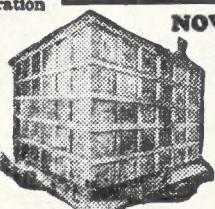
Here are a few of hundreds of positions open to Coyne-trained men. Our free-employment bureau gives you lifetime employment service.

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etc., etc. That's a glimpse of how we make you a master practical electrician in 90 days, teaching you far more than the average ordinary electrician ever knows and fitting you to step into jobs leading to big pay immediately after graduation. Here, in this world-famous *Parent school*—and nowhere else in the world—can you get this training!

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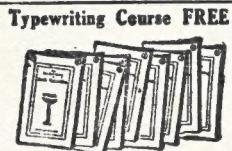
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"Dancing Partner" might be a fairy story, glamorous, fantastic, unreal, did it not give the sense to the reader that Lolita, glove clerk by day and taxi dancer by night, was the very sort of girl that he might well meet around the next corner.

Lolita, looking up into the handsome eyes of aristocratic Phil Nearing, fell suddenly and hopelessly in love with the owner of those eyes, and from then on her life became complicated. There were those who would bar the gate to her entrance to that world of wealth and fashion through which Phil Nearing walked so confidently. Out of a clear sky the false accusation of theft was made against her. She felt desolate, an outcast, and the cruelty of the world cut deep. And then just as suddenly there came a turn in events that brought the gold of sunshine into the blackness that covered Lolita's soul.

Vivian Grey, shrewd, sympathetic observer of youth, wise interpreter of the modern, you have done it again in this altogether fascinating novel.

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# Those who laughed loudest when I started to play ...were the most curious when I finished

**"HAIL! HAIL! THE GANG'S ALL HERE!"**

"Sure the gang's all here," moaned Iris, "but Ken Davis forgot to bring his music and he can't play a note without it."

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Iris," said Ken. "It was just stupidness on my part."

"Ah, what's the difference," I intuited. "If we're lucky we'll get some good dance music on the radio."

"The radio," said Iris dejectedly, "that's out too, Tom. Father ordered a new set and it's already two days overdue. There goes all my visions of a good party up in smoke."

"Cheer up," I said. "I'll play the old school songs and a few dance numbers."

"I know you don't know one note from another," said Iris, "but please try and keep the party in good humor."

I started to open the piano. Before I even had a chance to sit down, the wise cracks began. "Hey! What are you going to do—tune the piano?" said one of the boys.

"No, Brother, I'm going to play if you have no objections."

By this time the room rocked with laughter . . . giggles . . . hoots. "You play! That's rich," roared Ken.

#### A Dramatic Surprise

Solemnly a voice interrupted, "Sir, we do hereby appoint you musical director of this gathering. While

you go through the motions of playing, we'll sing our famous Marching Song."

Go through the motions! What a ripe time for my little surprise. With much gusto I struck the introductory chords of the famous "Stein Song."

Suddenly the laugh bombardment was silenced. One by one they moved closer to the piano—curiosity written all over their faces. Funny, too, the ones who had laughed loudest, were the most inquisitive. "So, Tom, you've been taking lessons on the sly from one of the teachers at the conservatory," said Ken.

"You're wrong—I learned to play by mail," I said proudly.

"Without a teacher you mean?" asked Iris.

"Certainly—why not? You see you don't need a teacher when you learn the U. S. School of Music way—the lessons are mailed right to your home."

Then I told them all about this famous course—how I set my own study periods and played real tunes *by note* right from the very start—how the clear and simple print and picture instructions kept me from making mistakes—how, in almost no time, I could play any kind of selections—jazz or classical.

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You can share in great advertising campaign. Over \$5,000.00 in 140 Prizes. Also thousands of dollars in special rewards. C. H. Essig, a farmer, Argos, Ind. won \$3,500; Mrs. Edna Zeller of Ky. won \$1,950. and scores of others. Now better than ever. In our new campaign someone wins \$2,500—why not you? Enter now—

## Can You Find 5 Faces?

Strange faces are in trees, clouds etc. Some are upside down, others look straight at you. If you find 5 or more faces, mark them, clip the picture and mail. If you answer now, and take an active part, you are sure to get a special cash reward. You may win Buick Sedan, and \$1,000 for promptness—or \$2,500 if you prefer all cash. Mail answer today.



## Send Today



Someone answering wins Buick Sedan delivered by nearest dealer. Duplicate prizes in case of ties. No matter where you live, if you want to win \$2,500 first prize money, send answer today for details. Can you find 5 or more faces? Send me money. Alan Grant, Mgr. 549 Washington Blvd., Dept. 47, Chicago

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# Running Hot Water From Your Cold Water Faucet Instantaneously

Only \$375 Complete

Agents! This Marvelous Invention  
Will Make Up to \$40<sup>00</sup> a Day Easy



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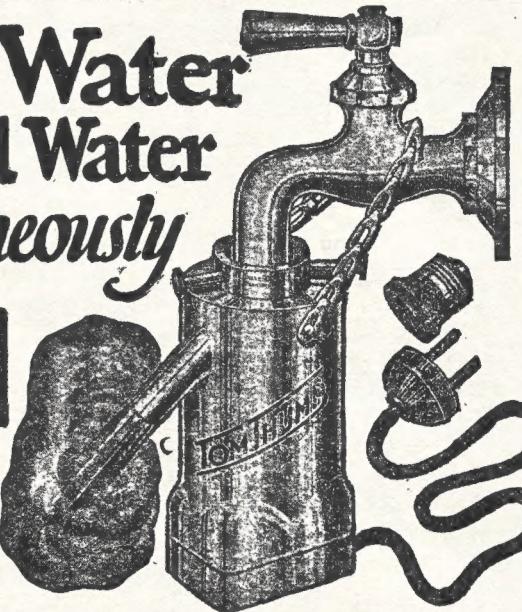
SHAVING



BATH



DOCTOR | FACTORY



Just plug in at the nearest electric outlet and presto!—you have instantaneous, continuous running hot water from your cold water faucet. This tells you in a nutshell why the invention of the Tom Thumb automatic electric hot water heater will make it easy for you to make up to \$40.00 a day.

The electric heated steaming hot water comes direct from the faucet instantaneously—yes, as quickly as you can turn on the current and the hot water runs indefinitely until you shut off the electricity. The cost is small—convenience is great. Useful wherever hot water is needed—no fuss or bother—attached to any faucet in a jiffy. Works on either AC or DC current. You and your customers will marvel and be delighted at this new discovery of electrical science. The small cost of \$3.75 for the Tom Thumb, Junior (110 volts) or \$5.75 for Tom Thumb, Senior (220 volts) does the work of any expensive hot water heating equipment costing several hundred dollars—the Tom Thumb absolutely eliminates the plumber or any other additional expense.

## No Installation - Stick One On Faucet and Sale Is Made

Think of it! no installation, no extra expense—nothing else to do but to stick it on the faucet, turn on electricity and it is there ready for duty. Easily removed when not wanted and easily carried to any part of house where cold water is running and hot water is wanted. Has many uses—too numerous to mention here. Weighs only 1 lb., made entirely of aluminum. Cannot rust, no moving parts, nothing to get out of order.

## If \$40 A Day Sounds Good To You Rush Coupon

This new scientific invention offers tremendous sales possibilities. At the low price of \$3.75 you should be able to sell at least forty a day. You pocket \$1.00 cash commission on every sale. If you would like to know all about this proposition, sign your name and address to coupon or, better still, get started selling it at once. Attach money order for \$2.75 to coupon and rush to us. We will send complete selling outfit.

Tom Thumb electric hot water heater order  
blanks, selling particulars and everything necessary to help you get started making up to \$40.00 a day at once.

Terminal Products Co., Inc.  
Dept. 1504, 200 Madison St.  
New York, N. Y.

The Tom Thumb electric hot water heater looks like a big money maker to me. I am sure interested in knowing how to make up to \$40.00 a day with this proposition. I have checked below the proposition I am interested in at this moment.

Enclosed find money order for \$2.75. Please send me one Tom Thumb Junior, order blanks and selling information. It is understood upon receipt of this sample outfit I will be permitted to take orders and collect \$1.00 cash deposit for every Tom Thumb, Jr. I sell, or \$1.50 for every Tom Thumb, Sr. I sell. It is understood I will send the orders to you and you will ship direct to my customers C.O.D. for the balance.

I would like to have additional information before acting as one of your agents. Please send this by return mail free of obligation.

Name .....  
Street .....  
City ..... State .....  
If you live outside of the United States, price is \$1.00 extra on each unit, cash with order.

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| Size        | Rim    | Tires  | Tubes | Size            | Tires  | Tubes  |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| 29x4.40-21" | \$2.30 | \$1.10 |       | 50x8            | \$2.20 | \$1.00 |
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| 29x4.75-19" | 2.45   | 1.20   |       | 51x8            | 2.95   | 1.15   |
| 50x4.95-21" | 2.90   | 1.35   |       | 52x4            | 2.95   | 1.15   |
| 29x5.00-20" | 2.95   | 1.35   |       | 52x4            | 2.95   | 1.15   |
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There was innocent, beautiful Marjie Hollins, poor, with no social standing, madly in love with Dick Winthrop, who, in turn, was engaged to an aristocratic daughter of a proud family.

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upon new principles. I give you legs in speed and endurance. Your character is revealed in your hand shake. I give you a grip of steel which will permit you to easily and quickly become master of stunts made with the hands. My book, "Molding a Mighty Grip" will help you to obtain the valuable information it contains and the short cut method it reveals. Every strong man has his own special stunts. I reveal 12 sensational stunts to you. I make it easy for you to master them all in my book "Strong Man Stunts Made Easy." You will marvel at the simplicity and ease with which I show you how to master them.

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George F. Jewett, Champion of Champions, is the author of all of these books. After you have read and practised what he tells you, you will be a two-fisted, fighting man with nerves of steel and muscles like iron. This will be the greatest health investment you ever make in your life—that's why you should order the entire set of six at the bargain price of only \$1.00.

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Just sign your name and address on the coupon and rush it in with your remittance—do it now, because this is a special limited offer.

George F. Jewett,  
Jewett Inst. of Physical Culture,  
Dept. 14-Q, 111 Poplar Street,  
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| 5-Gallon | \$ 6.50 |
| 7        | 8.85    |
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# CHELSEA HOUSE

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## The Dancer in the Shadow

By MARY FRANCES DONER

THE music stole through the dimness of the studio and there came the dancing figure of Ursula Royle, the daughter of a proud old family, who could snatch away men's senses by the sheer magic of her art. They called her dance "The Moth and the Flame," and to her flame there came the moth, Glenn Mortimer, one of her own people, aristocratic, sophisticated, madly in love with the beautiful girl.

But there was still another moth, whose wings had carried him into an atmosphere far different from that which surrounded Ursula and Glenn. This was Andrew Cameron, the vaudeville singer. He, too, loved Ursula, and for his sake she left the luxuries of her Washington Square home to take up with Andrew the fantastic life of the road.

And then there came into their lives adventure that carries the reader along in breathless pace to the thrilling climax.

"The Dancer in the Shadow" is a story of New York of not so long ago and of love and of high romance with a quality about it which is indeed distinguished.

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— with the breeze fanning your face, and the red blood zipping through your veins!

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Interested in your \_\_\_\_\_ Send literature.

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My age is  18-29 years.  30-39 years.  40 years and up.  
 under 18 years. Check your age group.



# CHELSEA HOUSE

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## Hearts of the Big Top

By ELLEN HOGUE

HE could ride, this Tom Jenison, this rather pallid, hollow-eyed nonentity in circus business, canvas slapper, man of mystery. That lean, long body was fluid as the liquid lightning it bestrode, reared and leaped with the lightning, thought with the brain of it and always one split second ahead of the murderous brute mind."

The story of how Jenison rode the wicked stallion Killer Boy, while the girl he loved looked on with agony in her beautiful eyes, is the smashing climax of a novel of circus life which keeps you as much on edge as that great riding kept its spectators breathless.

Under the Big Top of the circus, a fantastic world—"world of the ballyhoo, the shillabab; of hot dogs and popcorn and water-thin lemonade; of horseflesh and grease paint, of glitter and pomp; elephants that served a king in India; a mangy lion born in the Bronx zoo; stray dogs, stray boys, wives, sweethearts, bad men, good men, weak men, brave men, beggar men, 'thieves."

Such is the world which Milly the daughter of the circus and the heroine of this colorful novel adorned and reigned over. Ellen Hogue knows it so intimately and loves it so well that she makes it come to vibrant life before your eyes. Read "Hearts of the Big Top" if you want thrills in your fiction, thrills mingled with a most touching love story.

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(From the *Boston Post*, May 26, 1930)

## WHAT PRICE BOOKS?

The proposed big cut in book prices is at least going to be a most interesting experiment. Four or five large publishing houses announce they will cut their prices radically. Many others, equally large, declare they will stand pat on the old prices. For a time at least, therefore, it is not to be a general price-cutting war.

The cut-price publishers will bring out new books at \$1, as compared with \$2 and \$2.50 for the same type of books. The new price is to apply only to popular fiction; biographies, histories, et cetera, will remain unchanged.

In making this move, the cut-price publishers take the ground that mass production will reduce their costs and that the greater volume of sales will bring a reasonable profit.

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AND —

WE CUT THE PRICE OF PRODUCING BOOKS, SO THAT WE ARE ISSUING ATTRACTIVE NEW FICTION, IN CLOTH BINDINGS TO SELL AT 75 CENTS A COPY.

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## Chelsea House New Cloth-bound Books

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# The Crimson Trail

By **Mona Farnsworth**

**A Serial—Part I.**

## CHAPTER I.

THROUGH the pale-gold mist of early morning the impressive skyline of New York stabbed its way into the clear blue sky above, while the waters of the harbor danced and sparkled in the intermittent flashes of sunlight.

Fay Danforth leaned on the rail of the steamer that was bringing her home and watched through a blur of tears

the majestic Statue of Liberty as the ship slid slowly past. Home! She was coming home after an absence of five years. She had gone away a little girl of fifteen; she was coming back almost a woman. And how eagerly she had looked forward to her home-coming! With what joy she and her father had made their plans! At the thought of her father the tears in Fay's lovely violet eyes spilled over and splashed

down on the rail. To think that their homecoming should have turned into such a bitter tragedy! For three short days before, Clayton Danforth, the famous African explorer, and Fay's adored father, had been given an honorable burial at sea. And Fay, her beautiful little face wan with grief, had watched while the casket, draped in the American flag, slid slowly from the steamer and disappeared in the gray waters of the Atlantic.

"It is the only way, Miss Danforth," the ship's doctor had explained as gently as he could. "This fever, which caused your father's death, is the most virulent of all the African fevers. Has he ever been down with it before?"

"I don't know," Fay had said, dumbly bewildered with the suddenness of it all. "He might have been ill in Africa and not told me. I was in school in Switzerland. Dad was never a very good correspondent—sometimes months would go by and I wouldn't hear from him. Then he would write a long letter and explain that he had been into the interior and couldn't get mail out. So you see he might easily have been ill and not told me for fear it would frighten me."

"I see," the kind doctor had nodded. "No doubt that was the case. Probably he had been down with the fever some time, I should say, during the past year. It was in his blood. And the change of temperature, of climate, brought it out in this virulent form. You say he was well when you sailed from Bordeaux?"

"Perfectly well." Fay's voice had broken and her eyes had filled with tears again at the thought of the happy days that had preceded their sailing. They were so happy to be together again after the long separation! Her father had come to the school in Switzerland to get her and together they had traveled across France, stopping for a few grand days in Paris. And not once had her father shown the least sign of being ill.

They had gone sight-seeing; he had taken her to theaters and night clubs; they had shopped—and always he had been so gay, so happy and affectionate.

And the first two days on shipboard had been the same. They had made their happy plans for this home-coming. Mr. Danforth was preparing a series of lectures on his African discoveries and Fay was to go with him on his lecture tours. Together they wondered how much New York had changed in the five years; what friends would still be living there; what buildings had been torn down and what new ones put up.

Then, with the suddenness of a tropical storm, early in the morning of the third day the fever had come. It had been devastating. In an hour Mr. Danforth was raging with delirium. In five hours Fay, staring at him with wide frightened eyes, hardly recognized her father in this wild-eyed man with the discolored face and hoarse voice. In ten hours the doctor had told her there was no hope for his recovery—and two hours later he had died.

Somehow Fay had been glad that the doctor insisted upon the burial at sea. Her father had always been a wanderer, an adventurer, a lover of the secret ways of the world. And, next to his beloved Africa, he had loved the ocean. Fay couldn't imagine him content lying in a conventional grave in a quiet conventional cemetery. It was much better, she felt, that his body, that had gone on such high adventures, should be at the last tossed and buffeted by the restless waves he loved so well.

For the three days after the burial she had walked the decks in a daze. The passengers had tried to be kind to her, but she was too numb with misery to notice them. The loss of her mother six years before had been a dreadful blow, but then she had still had her father to comfort her. Now she had no one. To be sure she was coming home, but what did it mean after an absence

of five years? Her school friends were all in Switzerland. She could scarcely remember any friends she had left in New York. And the only relative she had in the world was a sister of her father's who lived in California! What would she do in this strange land she was calling home?

In a chill that almost amounted to panic, Fay watched while the misty towers and turrets of New York took shape in the morning sun. How strange it looked. The familiar Woolworth tower completely topped by the Chrysler Building, glittering like a silver crown and the new Chrysler tower in turn overshadowed by the skeleton girders of the Empire State. Was this the New York of her homecoming dreams? Was this place that seemed so alien and so strange really home?

The huge liner, guided by its puffing busy little tugs, nosed its way slowly into the dock. The gangplanks were lowered. There was the confused joyousness of greeting—flowers, shouts, laughter. But Fay, followed by porters carrying hers and her father's bags, walked down the gangplank alone. And alone she went to the customs tables where, pale and forlorn, she waited under the big "D" for the officer to go through her bags. In her dazed mind pounded the insistent question—when she left this place where would she go? What would she do? And there was so little money!

On the steamer, after her father had died, Fay had discovered to her dismay that they were arriving in New York with only enough money to last them a few days. No doubt her father had a connection with some bank of which she knew nothing, or possibly the lecture bureau would have advanced them money for expenses, but now that there would be no lectures there would, of course, be no advance.

Fay had always known that her father was far from being a wealthy man.

She had heard him talk about the men who backed his various expeditions, but who these men were she had no idea. Yet it seemed to her incredible that the small sum of money which she found in her father's wallet could be all the money he had in the world. And yet there was not a trace of any more. There were no bank books, no insurance policies, no papers of any kind. Fay shook her head in bewilderment. It was not like her father—but then it ~~was~~ all part of this dreadful nightmare.

At last she was through the customs and standing, her bags at her feet, the roar and rumble of West Street beating around her.

"Taxi? Taxi?"

"Yes—" Fay hesitated, she couldn't stay here on the sidewalk, but where should she tell the taxi driver to take her?

The porter packed her bags into the cab. At the sight of her father's big Gladstone bags her throat filled with sobs. Why had he died? Why? They could have been so happy together! They had looked forward so eagerly to this moment when they were to come home together!

"Where to, miss?" The taxi man was waiting.

"Oh!" Fay caught her breath—where to? "The Claybourne," she said hastily. "That is, if it's still in existence. I've been away for five years," she added, for she felt she just had to tell some one, even if it was only a cab driver, how very lonely she was and how strange everything seemed.

"Yes, the Claybourne's still there," the driver said. "You mean the hotel on West Forty-fifth Street?"

"Yes," Fay murmured gratefully. At least that would be familiar. She and her father had lived there for a year after her mother's death and until they went abroad. It was the nearest thing to home she knew in New York.

But even that was strange. The man-

agement had changed hands; the old doorman and room clerks were gone; the hotel itself had undergone a complete renovating and decorating and the prices had increased alarmingly. Fay realized, even as she engaged the cheapest room the hotel offered, that to-morrow, if not that very day, she would have to get a furnished room or go to a more reasonable hotel. And she must start her search for work at once.

But first she would go to her room, wash, put on fresh clothes, and maybe her spirits would gain courage. Ten minutes later Fay stood alone in the small, cheerless room whose one window looked out on a dismal landscape of roofs and chimneys. With a listless movement she flung her hat on the bed, loosened her coat and slipped it off. Fifteen minutes later she rose from the hot bath, refreshed and strengthened. With new vigor she brushed out the waves of her long golden hair.

"You've just got to come through this all right!" she told herself bravely as she slipped into her clothes. "Of course it's hard to be left almost stranded in a strange city, and of course it's—it's pretty terrible to lose dad"—she brushed the gathering tears out of her eyes—"but that shouldn't turn you into a little coward! What would dad do if he were stuck in a strange city with almost no money? You've got your father's blood in your veins, Fay Danforth, and it's up to you to come through on top! Do you suppose he sat down and got sorry for himself when he got up against things in the middle of Africa? Of course he didn't, and neither are you going to! You're going to get out and find yourself a job, and stop this sniffling at once!"

However, it was too late to start her job hunting that afternoon, so she went out for a walk, trying to get acquainted again with this strange city that once she had called home. Many people she passed turned for a second look at the

slight, pale girl, with the small exquisite face and the big wistful eyes so filled with tragedy. She walked up Broadway with its busy throngs, then across Fifty-seventh Street, past Carnegie Hall where she and her father had spent so many happy evenings.

As she turned into Fifth Avenue she caught her breath. How much New York had changed! The old buildings, the old brownstone homes, had all gone and in their place towered great white buildings, like the buildings of a dream city, raising their terraced turrets to the sky.

"Hello, Arlette," said a man's voice suddenly at her elbow. "You're staring as if you'd never seen a building before." A mellow laugh followed the remark.

Fay turned, flushing a little as she realized how she had been staring first at one amazing building then another, and looked straight into the merriest, kindest, brown eyes she had ever seen. In the first swift embarrassed glance Fay realized, too, that the man was young and unusually handsome with that lean, clean-cut look she loved to think of as especially American and a great shock of thick chestnut hair that gleamed in the sunlight, for he held his soft felt hat in his hand.

"Aren't you going to be a nice girl and speak to me, Arlette?" he asked, bending toward her attentively. "You look at me as if you'd never seen me before!" He laughed again and Fay, in spite of herself, smiled—he had such a happy, contagious laugh.

"I'm afraid you have made a mistake—" she began, and at her cool, formal little tone the smile faded from his face and his eyes grew grave.

"Oh, Arlette!" He took a step toward her and put his hand on her arm in a friendly gesture. "Don't be such a goop! We both got sort of peeved the other night, but don't hold it against me. I need you dreadfully—you know I

do! I simply can't get along without you! Now come on, be a good sport—you're not angry any more, are you?"

"But really—" Fay began again, trying to explain.

"Listen," he interrupted, "I'm in an awful rush—got an important appointment at five, and it's five minutes of now. So listen—you're not mad at me any more, are you?"



*"Aren't you going to be a nice girl and speak to me, Arlette?" he asked, bending toward her attentively. "You look at me as if you'd never seen me before!"*

"No," Fay said gently, "I'm not mad at you."

"Good!" His handsome face became suddenly illumined. "That's a good girl! Then if you're not mad we'll have dinner together—all right? The same place and the usual time. Good-by, sorry I've got to hurry off!" And with a wave of his hat he was gone.

Fay stood stock-still and stared after him. That he had actually mistaken her for some one else was apparent, but who was Arlette? And how very much alike they must be to have a man who evidently knew her so well mistake Fay for her! It must almost be a case of duplicate appearance. Fay smiled. How queer to think that there must be a girl who looked and talked and smiled as she did! For this strange man had not doubted that Fay was Arlette when she spoke to him or when—as she said she wasn't mad at him—she smiled a little. A thrill of interest crept through Fay's veins. It was thrilling to think that somewhere in this very town, she had a double, and that a man as handsome and kind and splendid as this strange young man should be in love with that double. For Fay didn't doubt for a moment but that he was in love with the mysterious Arlette. And somehow that knowledge was disturbing. For some reason she couldn't understand, it made Fay vaguely unhappy to think of the handsome stranger in love with Arlette.

Slowly Fay continued her walk down Fifth Avenue, but she couldn't get the incident out of her mind. She looked in the shop windows with their gorgeous displays of jewels and gowns, laces, and rare ornaments, but always between her and the lovely things came a pair of laughing brown eyes and the sound of a mellow, pleading voice. How could Arlette ever have got mad at him? Fay wondered. Surely any girl who was lucky enough to have such a splendid young god fall in love with her would be an awful goose to get mad at him.

Suddenly Fay realized that, as she had wandered aimlessly around, dusk had fallen. The lights were turned on and sparkled in the soft darkness like jewels in a queen's crown. It was dinner time and Fay was hungry. For the first time since her father's death had shadowed her life with tragedy her healthy young appetite raised its voice and demanded food. She would have liked to have gone back to her hotel, dressed in a black dinner dress she had tucked in her bag, and eaten a real dinner in the hotel dining room, with its softly shaded lights, gently murmuring music and silent waiters. But a fear of the price of such luxuries made her hesitate. If the cost of the rooms in the Claybourne had doubled during the last five years what must the prices in the dining room have done?

So in the end Fay dropped in at a little tea room on West Forty-eighth Street that modestly announced an eighty-five-cent dinner. "In two or three days, my girl," she told herself whimsically, "you won't be able to afford this, if you don't get a job." And then she began wondering, as she ate her filet of sole, what she would have been eating if she had really been Arlette. Was the handsome man, with the laughing brown eyes, still waiting "at the usual place"? Fay glanced at her wrist watch. Seven o'clock. Would he have given her up by this time or would he still be waiting?

Fay felt a little unhappy as she thought of the tall handsome man, with his head like a Viking god, pacing up and down impatiently waiting—waiting, while she sat there eating dinner all by herself and Arlette—where was Arlette? Who was Arlette? And why did Arlette and the strange young man haunt her thoughts? Little did Fay dream, as she finished her dinner and walked slowly toward her hotel, how soon and how amazingly her questions were to be answered.

The next day dawned bright and Fay, as she looked out over the roofs and aerials from her one small window, felt sure that somehow before night she would have a job and all would be well. She had also decided to phone two old friends of her father's, of whom he had spoken only the day before he became ill. Fay herself didn't know them, but she felt they might be willing to help her for her father's sake.

The first thing she did after eating a light breakfast in a near-by coffee shop was to go to a phone booth, filled with hope and optimism. But ten minutes later she emerged, and any one seeing her would have known she was fighting depression and disappointment. The corners of her lovely little mouth were drawn, her white teeth were dug into her lower lips, and the tears in her blue eyes threatened to brim over. Her two calls had both been failures. One of the men was in Europe and the other had moved away from New York. As Fay walked out again onto the sidewalk she felt as if the last bit of earth had been cut from under her.

Fay hadn't realized how much she had hoped her father's friends might be able to help her till she had found they couldn't be reached. But, after she had walked a few blocks, the sunshine and the hurrying people and her own good common sense, helped to bring back her courage. She bought a newspaper and pored over the "Help Wanted" columns, but it seemed to her that every one wanted trained help of some kind. No one was willing to hire a young inexperienced girl who, less than a month before, was being taught music and languages in a Swiss school. What good was an education, thought Fay bitterly, if you weren't able to earn enough to keep yourself from starving?

And as the days passed Fay, in spite of her courage and good sense, grew more and more bitter and more and more frightened. Was there nothing,

in all this big roaring city, that she could do to keep body and soul together? Her money was going at an alarming rate. She was eating only one meal a day now, and walked blocks in order to save carfare and, worse than all, she owed a week's hotel bill. What was she going to do? What would happen to her when her money was all gone—as it would be in another day? What would the hotel manager do to her when he found that she couldn't pay for her room? That night she cried herself to sleep with long, shuddering, lonely sobs while her bitter tears sank soggily into the pillow.

The next morning she once more bought a morning paper with two of her precious pennies, and looked drearily through it with discouraged eyes. One more day of walking the streets, climbing stairs, only to be told "there was nothing to-day," and wearily climbing down again.

There were four advertisements she found that might mean a possible job. The first was a cafeteria that was advertising for an "experienced counter girl." Fay thought she might make them believe she was experienced. The second was a department store that wanted girls in their bargain basement. The third was an old lady who wanted a companion—that might be nice, Fay thought wistfully. And the fourth was an artist down in Gramercy Square who was advertising for a model—"small, blonde with a paintable face." Fay wasn't sure her face was "paintable," but at least she would try for the job.

At four o'clock that afternoon it was the only job left to apply for. The whole day had been spent tracking down the other three jobs—in vain. In order to save car fare, Fay had walked first to the Blossom Cafeteria, on Sixth Avenue, but the heavy-faced man in charge had quickly discovered that she had never had a trace of experience as counter girl and had sent her off with a sar-

castic sneer. Then she had walked over to the department store, but it was nearly noon by that time and the jobs were all gone.

Wearily Fay counted the small store of silver that represented her only capital. If she ate lunch she wouldn't be able to eat dinner so, with a sigh, she

started on the long walk way uptown, to the apartment of the old lady who was advertising for a companion. And when she got there, the old lady had given the job to another girl.

"I'm sorry, my dear," she had said as she saw Fay's disappointment. "I'm sure you would have been satisfactory,



*It seemed to Fay an eternity that she stood there, rooted to the spot with horror, unable to move.*

but Miss Eltinge came not fifteen minutes ago and she has the position."

Fifteen minutes! If Fay had spent five cents and had used the subway instead of walking that weary distance, she would have got the job. And the old lady was so nice and kind, too! But how could Fay have dreamed that if she had actually got the job she longed for so badly, the whole course of her life would have been changed and she never again would have met the man of her destiny?

Four o'clock found her walking again downtown toward Gramercy Square and the studio of the artist who was advertising for a small blonde model with a paintable face.

It was dusk when she finally arrived at the small, picturesque square, set with such peace and quiet in the midst of the city's turmoil. The address of the artist was on the south side of the square, in one of a few of the old brownstone houses still left to tell of a bygone day. The advertisement had given no name but Fay, when she hunted for the bell of 2 F, found that the name was Gordon Craig. Fay's heart leaped. Gordon Craig! The great illustrator! Wouldn't it be splendid if she were really the type he was seeking! Wouldn't it be glorious if at last she might get a job—and such a gorgeous job! Weary as she was she mounted the stairs to the second floor with a light step, for hope suddenly lent wings to her heavy feet.

It was dark in the upper hall and Fay had difficulty in finding the right door, but finally, by stooping down and peering carefully at the card tacked under the brass knocker, she made out the name Gordon Craig and, her fingers suddenly trembling with excitement, she rang the bell.

"Oh, please let him give me a job," she implored silently as she waited. "Oh, please! I'll do anything at all. If he doesn't want me as a model I'll scrub

his floors and cook his meals. I suppose I can learn to cook. I'll do anything!"

But no one answered the bell. It was then that Fay, her eyes becoming accustomed to the dusk of the hall, noticed that the door wasn't tight closed. It was open a crack. Fay rang again. She could hear the bell ring inside, then it seemed to her that she heard footsteps, as if some one were coming to open the door. But no one came and everything was again silent.

Fay never could explain exactly why she did what she did next. She knew perfectly well that the thing she should do was to turn around and go down the stairs and come back later when Gordon Craig was home. But she was so tired and faint and hungry that it seemed to her as if she simply couldn't go out again into the cold street that was so filled with darkness and hurrying strangers who paid no attention to her and didn't care whether she starved or not. Somehow she was sure that inside the studio of Gordon Craig there would be warmth and comfort and food—and the door was ajar.

For another second Fay hesitated then, driven by her great weariness and hunger, she pushed open the door and went in.

The door opened onto a little square foyer hall; at the left was an open door leading into a small bedroom, at the right was another door, leading into a tiny kitchenette, and in front of Fay, though rather to the left, was the wide doorway leading into the studio. There was no door here, though heavy portières hung in thick folds, and between them drifted a faint light, evidently from the studio beyond.

Fay stood for a moment, wondering just what to do next. Probably, if any one were in the apartment at all, they would be in the studio. She took a few steps toward the band of dim light that drifted through the portières. It

was an old house and the floor boards creaked complainingly as she stepped on them, and at the first creak the portières wavered and bulged, as if some one was standing behind them watching.

Fay stopped stock-still, a sudden chill of fear running through her veins. Who was behind the curtains? If there were some one in the studio, why hadn't he answered the bell? Suppose something were wrong? Suppose—

Before her tumbled thoughts could run any further, the portière gave another bulge and a girl's head peered through. She was a lovely girl—even a beautiful girl—with an elfin face and a golden mop of curly hair. But it was not that that made Fay stand and stare at her, with her own lovely lips parted and her eyes almost popping with amazement. It was the fact that she was staring at her double! She was staring into her own blue eyes, set in the lineaments of her own lovely features, under the rebellious curls of her own golden hair.

Instantly something clicked in Fay's brain. This was Arlette! This must be the mysterious girl for whom she had been taken that afternoon she walked down Fifth Avenue! As she realized who the other girl must be, Fay smiled. But Arlette, if it really were Arlette, continued to stare and there was something in her wide blue eyes that sent again down Fay's spine that chill of fear. Why was she so pale? What made her eyes so wild? So filled with terror? But, in spite of the obvious fright that gripped her, Arlette was the first to speak.

"Who are you?" she said, and it seemed to Fay as if she moved her lips with an effort, as if they, too, were stiff with terror.

"I came to see Mr. Craig," Fay said. "He advertised for a model."

"Sh-h!" Arlette whispered. "Don't talk out loud—though I don't suppose it makes any difference." She stepped out from behind the portière and the heavy

folds dropped into place behind her. "You look exactly like me," she murmured, and there was a strange underlying meaning in her tone.

"Yes," Fay agreed, feeling, for some reason, more and more frightened. There was something uncanny in standing in this dim foyer hall, talking in whispers to a girl who was her exact double. And why should they whisper? "You're Arlette," Fay added. "I was mistaken for you the other day."

"Maybe you'll be mistaken for me again," Arlette whispered, her strange staring eyes fastened on Fay's face. "So you came to see Gordon Craig?" she went on. "Well—you'll find him in there." She nodded over her shoulder toward the studio. "He's waiting for you. I'll run along," she added, pulling a black beret over her golden curls. "Good-by—and I hope you get the job with Gordon Craig!" She slipped through the front door, closing it softly behind her, and Fay was left alone. Though, of course, Mr. Craig was in the studio.

Now that Arlette, with her queer staring eyes, had gone, Fay didn't feel so frightened. Probably it would be all right after all. But probably, too, Gordon Craig wouldn't be able to use her as a model as long as she looked so exactly like Arlette. For Fay was sure that Arlette already worked for him. However, she'd go in and find out. So, fluffing out her curls and patting her hat straight, she stepped through the portières—and stopped in cold, unbelieving horror!

Gordon Craig was indeed there—if the big, shaggy red-headed man sprawled in a chair before the easel was Gordon Craig. The man with a paint-smeared palette still held in his stiff fingers; the man with the wide, staring, unseeing eyes; the man with a bullet hole clean through his head, and the thick stream of blood congealed on his cheek and shoulder!

It seemed to Fay an eternity that she stood there, rooted to the spot with horror, unable to move. Then suddenly came the sound of a step in the outer hallway and Fay whirled. She must get out—get away. Suppose she were found with a murderer! Suppose they accused her! Like a flash she realized they would accuse her! This was what Arlette knew when she stared at her with those strange, terrorized eyes!

There were more footsteps in the hall. They stopped before the door, the handle turned, the door opened.

"Hey—Craig!" a man's voice shouted, a voice that made Fay's heart leap. It was the man she had met on Fifth Avenue! "Hey—Craig!" he called again, standing in the open doorway. Then he saw her. "Hello, Arlette." He came into the little foyer hall, closing the door behind him. "You're a fine one, you are." And then he saw her face, stone-white, her lips twisted with terror, her eyes wide and pleading. "What's the matter? What—"

Fay moved her lips but no sound came.

"Where's Craig?"

"In there," at last her voice came. "I didn't do it! I don't know anything about it!" The words tumbled out in a frightened torrent.

"Arlette!" The handsome stranger caught hold of her arm and, terrified as she was, Fay thrilled at his touch. "Arlette! What are you talking about?"

"I'm not Arlette," Fay suddenly cried, sagging against the portière. "Oh, what shall I do?" she moaned softly. "I'm not Arlette and some one has murdered Gordon Craig!" She sagged farther, her knees gave way completely, and it seemed to Fay as if the small hallway turned into a black, smothering blanket.

When she opened her eyes the first thing she saw was the handsome face of the strange man bending above her. He was holding a glass of water to her lips while he supported her head with

his other hand. Fay noticed that his face was almost as pale as her own.

"Are you better?" he asked, and she thrilled to the knowledge that his voice had the mellow ring she remembered so well.

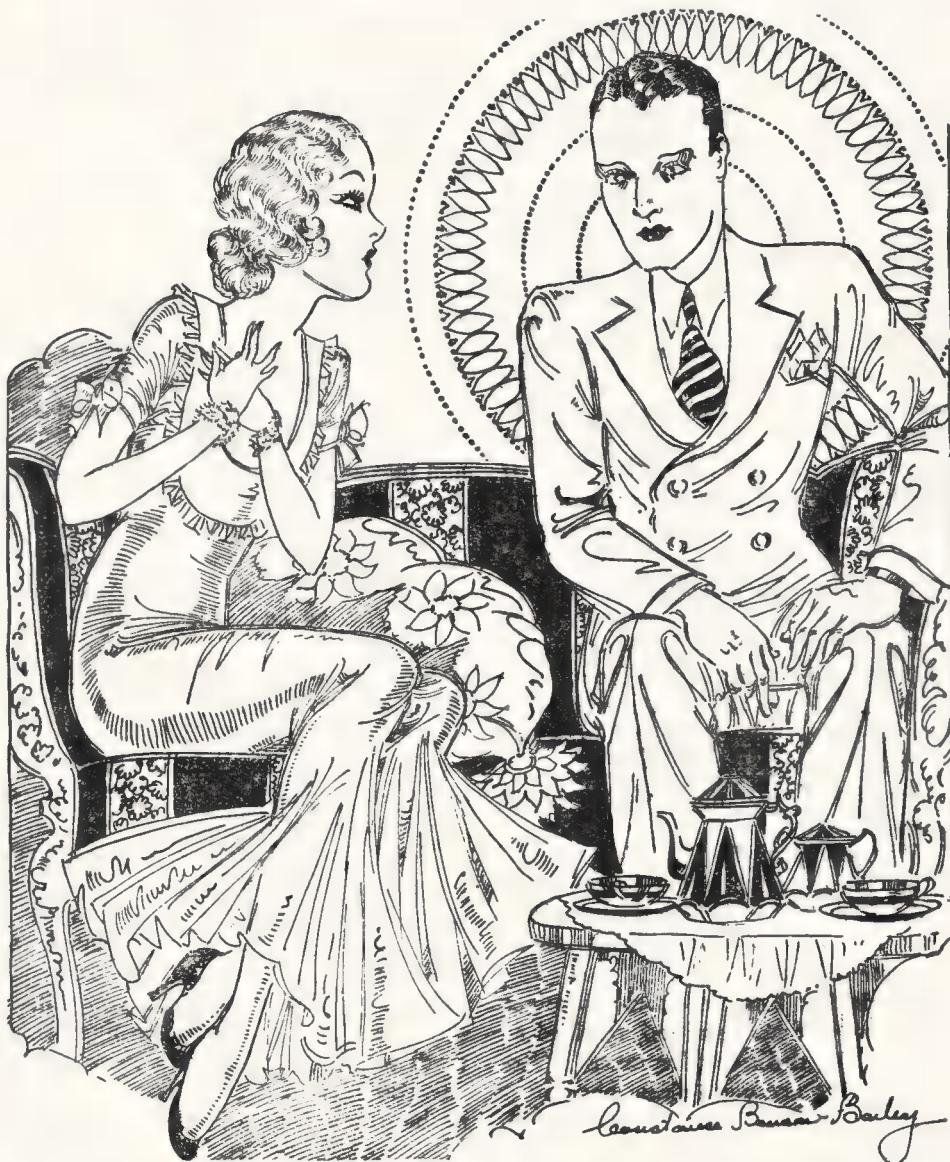
"Thank you—yes." She sat up and memory flooded back to her temporarily numbed brain. "Oh!" She covered her face with her hands. "Oh—what shall I do? What shall—"

"See here, Arlette, you've got to pull yourself together." The mellow voice was firm. "Tell me the truth and I'll do all I can to help you. But don't try and pull any story about your not being Arlette—do you really think you could fool me?" It seemed to Fay's jealous ears that there was a note of tenderness in the last question. And yet, why shouldn't there be if this handsome man were in love with Arlette? And yet, if he were, would he be so stern? At the thought, Fay's heart thrilled. Suppose he weren't really in love with Arlette after all? Even in the horror of her dangerous position Fay's heart leaped at the thought.

"But I'm not trying to pull any story," she told him earnestly. "I'm not Arlette—I'm Fay Danforth. I'm the girl you met the other day—eight days ago—on Fifth Avenue. You told me to meet you for dinner and you called me Arlette, but I'm not. I'm Fay Danforth and I came here in answer to an advertisement that Gordon Craig put in the papers for a model. I never saw Gordon Craig before in my life! Oh, please believe me! I can take you to the Hotel Claybourne, where I'm stopping—the room clerk will identify me. Please—you *must* believe me!"

"I do believe you," the mellow voice said softly. Heaven knows why I should—or how I can—for you are the living image of Arlette—hair, face, voice, eyes—everything."

"I know I am," Fay said helplessly. "I saw her."



*Then when they were sitting in front of the fire, Fay poured her story into Barry's sympathetic ears.*

"You saw her?" The strange man stared and his eyes were wide with amazement. "Where? When? But wait"—he stopped her as she opened her mouth to answer his questions—"before we do anything else we've got to get you away from here. I believe

you're not Arlette—but the police never would. And there's not a doubt in the world she'll be wanted for this—murder." He brought out the last word as if it hurt him. "She—but I'll tell you the story when we are safe somewhere. Come—we'll go to my studio, where

you'll be safe for the night, but we must get away from here."

"But we can't leave——" For the first time Fay looked at the still figure sprawled so grotesquely in the chair in front of the easel.

"We must. We can't be found here. It would mean endless trouble. Come with me—I'll phone the police station from a booth outside."

"My studio is down in the Village," he went on when they were downstairs. "I don't think it would be safe to take a taxi—too easily traced later. Do you mind the subway?"

Fay shook her head. Did she mind the subway? She, who had walked from one end of Manhattan to the other to save car fare!

They turned their faces toward the nearest subway station. For a few moments they walked in silence, bending a little to meet the sharp wind that had sprung up. Then the man said suddenly:

"I'm afraid, with all that's happened, that I've neglected to introduce myself. I'm Barry Knight, and I have a studio down in the Village where I play around with marble and clay."

"You're a sculptor?" asked Fay, looking at him interestedly.

"Yes—of a sort," Barry admitted modestly. "Wait a second here, if you don't mind," he added. "I can phone from this cigar store."

While he was phoning the police station, Fay walked slowly up and down in the black shadow of the deserted office building. What would happen to her now? She was still too dazed by the shock and horror of her experience to think clearly. She was cold and very hungry, but even with all her misery and danger, she still felt a thrill of gladness to think she had met again the man who had taken such possession of her thoughts.

In a very few minutes he had rejoined her.

"I didn't dare tell them I had discovered the body," he explained in a low voice. "I told them I had reason to know that Craig was in his studio and that his phone didn't answer, so I felt the matter had better be investigated. Then I hung up before they could ask any questions. That'll put them on the trail but it won't get you into danger."

"If it weren't for me you would be able to—to do more to help, wouldn't you?" Fay asked.

"The police will do everything possible," Barry answered quietly. "Craig is—dead—nothing can be done for him now."

"You knew him well?" Fay's tone was filled with sympathy.

"He was my best friend." Barry's voice held that harsh gruff note with which men attempt to hide their emotions. "To think that Arlette—— But we mustn't talk about it now. Wait till we get home," he added, as he took her arm and together they descended the steps into the subway.

Twenty minutes later Barry ushered Fay into the bare, spacious garret that was his studio. The room spread itself across the entire top of one of the old buildings in Greenwich Village and was so large that the heroic group in marble, upon which Barry was evidently working, had room to stand at one end and leave plenty of space at the other end for living quarters. It was here that a big Persian rug was spread before a crackling fire and there were huge armchairs, a few charming paintings, some bits of brass and copper that reflected the warm light of the fire, and a wide-leaved table.

"Have you had your dinner?" Barry asked as he helped Fay with her coat and hat and found her a comfortable chair.

"No, I haven't," she said hesitatingly. "But please don't bother——"

"It's no bother." Barry pulled the

table closer to the fire and began to set it with two plates, two cups and saucers, and some lovely old silver. "And besides, we can talk better while we eat."

Fay sat quietly in the big chair and watched him move back and forth. She was so faint with hunger and so exhausted from the tremendous amount of walking she had done, that it seemed to her almost as if she were living in a dream. The warm room made her drowsy; the comfort and the feeling that at last she was being taken care of, filled her with lassitude and a delicious sense of relaxation. The horror of the past hour seemed very far away and unreal.

"Wake up—dinner's ready!"

Fay opened surprised eyes. "Did I really fall asleep? I'm so sorry!" She jumped up in confusion.

"Nothing to be sorry about." Barry smiled at her. "It's been a pretty dreadful experience for you. Are you hungry?"

"Hungry?" Fay was still half asleep. "I haven't eaten a real meal in three days! Oh—I didn't mean to say that!" She blushed and bit her lips. "I wasn't awake, I guess. Please don't bother about me."

"Bother about you?" Barry led her to the lovely candle-lit table and held her chair while she slipped into it. "Of course I'll bother about you. Now eat, child, and when you've eaten as much as you possibly can, we'll talk and you can tell me all about it."

Fay obediently ate the delicious dinner Barry had produced as if by magic from his diminutive, curtained kitchenette. She devoured the succulent lamb chops and tender green peas and fluffy baked potatoes and crisp salad and towering French pastry that Barry lifted carefully from its box. Then, when they were sitting in front of the fire, sipping their black coffee, with the table pushed back out of the way, Fay poured her story into Barry's sympathetic ears.

And as he listened attentively and watched her lovely face in the glowing light of the fire, he thought he had never seen any one so beautiful in all his life. For, while her features and coloring were the exact duplicate of Arlette, there was a vivacity and warmth about her that the other girl lacked entirely.

"You poor kid," he said softly as she finished. "You've just had one rotten break after another."

Fay didn't answer. She was busy staring into the fire—did he really think of her as a "kid"? She who so longed to mean something more to this handsome man, whose brown eyes were so warm with sympathy.

"And now," Barry went on in a thoughtful murmur, "you've got mixed up in—in this."

"I don't know what to say," Fay said gently, her own voice sinking to a murmur. "You told me Gordon Craig was your best friend—it is all so dreadful—and yet to offer sympathy and say I'm sorry, sounds so—so useless!"

"It is useless," Barry said gravely. "It's all useless, and Craig's murder is the most useless of all. Arlette—" He paused thoughtfully. "I must tell you about Arlette," he added.

"Do you really think she committed the murder?" Fay asked wonderingly. It seemed so impossible that any one, especially a girl, could deliberately take a life.

"I'll tell you about—" Barry began, when a sharp knock on the door cut across his words.

"The police!" Fay's suddenly stiff lips formed the words but no sound came.

For a frozen moment she and Barry stared at each other across the warm, fire-lit silence. The knock came again—louder and more insistent.

Silently Barry rose from his chair and motioned Fay to follow him. Together they tiptoed across the room, praying with every step that no boards

in the old floor would creak. Barry drew aside a curtain, disclosing a small room—a sort of closet storeroom. It was lighted only by the dim haze that came through the dusty window and at this window Fay could make out the iron skeleton of a fire escape.

"I'll stave them off, if it is the police," Barry whispered. "Don't worry. I'll get rid of them somehow!" And he was gone, striding swiftly across the studio to open the door.

A moment later, through a rip in the curtain, Fay saw two men with lean faces and iron mouths enter the room.

"We're from Center Street," said one of them gruffly. "And we've come to inquire into the murder of Gordon Craig!"

## CHAPTER II.

It seemed to Fay, cowering in the dusty dimness of the little storeroom, that the words of the detective were a huge hand squeezing her heart. Suppose they insisted upon searching the studio? Suppose they found her? Fay grew cold at the thought and her hands trembled like rose petals. Then she peeped through the rip in the curtain and saw Barry, quiet and composed, and somehow her hands stopped trembling and a little warmth crept back into her heart. Barry would take care of her. Barry, who was so big and strong and calm, would manage, somehow, to get rid of those awful men.

But at Barry's first words Fay grew cold again, for they made her realize the very difficult and delicate position Barry was in.

"You wish to know," he was saying slowly, "about the—the death of Gordon Craig?" Fay knew he was fencing for time. He couldn't admit that he knew of the murder because, as far as Barry knew, the detectives had no idea it was he who had phoned the police. And yet he didn't dare show too much surprise for fear they did know he had

phoned. And their next words proved this to be so.

"Now, see here, Mr. Knight"—one of the detectives came close to Barry—"don't try any of this innocent stuff. We know too much, see? You're mixed up pretty close in this murder—you and that girl you had with you when you phoned. Oh, we know all about her—and we know all about that phone call. You didn't think you could get away with that, did you?"

"I wasn't trying to get away with anything." Barry lit a cigarette with steady fingers.

"All right. Now get this. That girl knows a lot about the murder. We've just come from Craig's studio—and we know a lot more about that girl than you think we do. Maybe you're in it and maybe you're not, but you'd better tell us what you know. It will be a lot easier for us and make everything a lot better for you."

"I know nothing about the murder," Barry said slowly. "If you wish to work on the supposition that I made the call you mention, that is your affair. I can't offer an alibi because I was reading in the public library at that time."

"At what time?" snapped the detective.

In the little storeroom Fay almost cried out. Barry was trapped! But Barry smiled easily.

"I was there from two o'clock this afternoon till about an hour and a half ago. I assumed that the call you mention was made some time this afternoon. If I am wrong——"

The detective grunted and Fay almost fainted with relief. Barry had gotten out of that very cleverly.

"Who was the girl with you?" barked the detective.

"I was alone," answered Barry in a calm, even tone.

"Now see here"—the detective's face was red with anger—"you'd better come across with all you know or we're go-

ing to arrest you on suspicion and let you tell it to a jury."

"Arrest me? Without a warrant?" asked Barry innocently.

The detective's face grew purple. He started to speak but nothing came from his lips but a furious splutter.

"This is the point, Mr. Knight." The second detective stepped forward. "We traced that phone call to the cigar store near Gramercy Square. The salesman said he remembered the call because it was the only one made from his store between the hours of five thirty and seven. He also told us that the call had been put through by a friend of Gordon Craig's. He didn't know your name but he described you and said that you'd been in there often with Craig. We took his description back to the woman who owns the house where Craig's studio was and she said it was you and gave us your address. It was through her that we got the dope about the girl. Now, it won't do you a bit of good to stall. You put that call through and you know where the girl is—"

"Do I look like the kind of man who would give information regarding a girl?" Barry glared at the detectives, "I tell you I don't know a thing about the death of Gordon Craig. And that's all I will tell you!"

"Where's Arlette Valentine?" barked the first detective.

"Arlette? I haven't the remotest idea," said Barry with perfect truth. "I haven't seen her to-day."

"You haven't, huh? And who was the blonde with you when you made that call if it wasn't Arlette? Come on—I bet she's still here. We'll search your place and see what we'll find. If you won't tell us the truth, we'll find it out for ourselves!"

Through the rip in the curtain Fay saw Barry's face grow white, but he said nothing. And she didn't wait to see more. As noiselessly as she could, she slipped across the storeroom to the

dusty window where, through the grimy panes, she could see the iron outline of the fire escape. With trembling fingers she pushed back the rusty lock.

Almost faint with terror, she gathered all her frail strength to the task of raising the dusty window. Suppose it made a noise? It would make a little noise, of course, but suppose it gave a loud, creaking shriek that would bring the detectives in at once? Cautiously she tested it. From the big studio came the sound of the detectives' heavy feet and loud voices. Fay hooked her fingers in the crossbars of the window and pushed. It gave a sharp, protesting shriek of old wood. It seemed to Fay as if her heart turned over.

But instantly, from the studio, came the sound of a crash. Fay knew what had happened. Barry had heard the window. He knew what she was doing and he had upset something to give her a chance to open it and get away. Clever Barry! Under cover of the confusion over whatever it was Barry had smashed, Fay opened the rusty old window and slipped out onto the fire escape, closing the window carefully behind her.

For a moment, after she had closed the window safely behind her, she stood on the iron platform of the fire escape. Which way should she go? Up or down? But instantly that problem was settled for her. Below her, on the sidewalk, stood a policeman, twirling his night club and whistling softly. Without a second's hesitation Fay turned and climbed the short flight of iron stairs to the roof.

Then, lying flat down, she peered over the edge to look at the policeman. Maybe he had seen her climb up. Maybe the detectives had set him down there to watch the fire escape on the chance that she'd try to get away. But evidently they hadn't, for he still stood twirling his nightstick. And after another minute he strolled slowly away. Fay breathed a sigh of relief.

But what should she do now? She must get away if she could. Maybe this roof connected with another and if it did she could climb down a neighboring fire escape. But one glance told her this was impossible. The building on one side of Barry's house was a warehouse that towered fifteen floors above the irregular roof where Fay crouched. The building on the other side was an old store whose roof was twenty-five feet below her. She was trapped. If the detectives did search the roof they would find her without fail. And if they discovered that the window in the storeroom had been opened they would certainly come up the fire escape. Fay shivered and buried her face in her hands.

But a moment later she raised her head. The adventurous, never-say-die blood of her father beat in her veins. She wouldn't be caught without doing her best to prevent it. She got up and stumbled across the dark roof to reconnoiter. Maybe there would be a good place to hide.

It was an old roof, cut up with the big skylight that was over Barry's studio and laced across with clothes lines. There was a big brick chimney, too, and a raised platform that covered, probably, some stairs. Finally, Fay decided the place would be the corner between the chimney and the stair cover. She rolled herself into as small a ball as possible and crouched there in the black shadow.

It seemed to her that hours passed. Above her the stars twinkled coldly in the sky. A night wind, blowing across the housetops made her shiver, but she shivered more with fear. Had the detectives gone? No, for if they had, Barry would have come up for her. Then they were still searching for her. Had they found the unlocked window? Were they even now on the fire escape? Fay strained her ears to catch the sound of a possible footfall. She didn't dare raise her head to look, for fear her

golden hair would shine in the faint light.

Suddenly her heart stood still. Behind her, on the roof, came the sound of the dreaded footstep. They had come! They would find her! Her first frenzied instinct was to leap from her hiding place and run. But a second later she realized the foolishness of that. There was no place to run to. If she moved, if she so much as stirred, they would find her all the more quickly. All she could do was wait, like a rat in a trap, until they found her. And then what? What would happen to her when they found her?

The steps came nearer. It seemed to Fay that she lived through a long eternity while those fateful footsteps came steadily nearer across the old sheet-iron roof. Now they had almost reached her. Another ten seconds and they would find her, crouched there in the black shadow.

Suddenly Fay's nerves snapped. She couldn't stay there another instant and wait. Better jump up and have it over with. Maybe she could beat the men to the fire escape. Maybe she could run down it and get away. But even if she were caught, anything were better than crouching there waiting.

With a sudden cry that sounded like a trapped animal, Fay popped out of her hiding place. If she could only reach the fire escape first! As she turned to run she caught sight of the black shadow of the man who was hunting for her. Instantly he was after her—she heard him call.

Then her foot tripped on an iron projection and she would have fallen headlong if the man hadn't caught her, holding her slim shoulders tight in the steady grip of his strong hands.

For a hideous moment, as Fay felt the clutch of the strong fingers, she thought she was going to faint. Then her heart leaped at the sound of a dear, familiar voice!



*"Cheer up," Gordon said over his shoulder. "I'm going back to Phyllis—  
we're all made up!"*

"Fay! Fay, child—it's Barry—oh, please don't—" For Fay, in the sudden relief from her dreadful terror, had burst into nervous tears.

"I'm—I'm all right," she sobbed, clinging to Barry's strong arms. "Only—only I was so frightened. I thought you were the detective!"

"I know," Barry said soothingly. "I wanted to call, but I was afraid some one would hear me."

"Then those detectives haven't gone?" Fay asked, her eyes suddenly wide with fright again. "Oh, Barry!"

"Yes, they've gone, really gone. And you can come back to the studio and get warm by the fire. Come on—I'll make you some coffee."

With a murmured flow of comforting words, he guided her carefully down the stairs that led from the roof into the inner hall, and two minutes later she



was gratefully toasting herself before Barry's roaring fire.

"But how did you get rid of them?" she asked wonderingly. "The last I heard was that they were going to search the studio. That was when I scooted up to the roof."

"I heard you," Barry grinned. "Did you hear me upset the tea cart? It made a lovely racket."

"I did and I was never so grateful for anything in all my life. They'd have heard me opening that window surely if it hadn't been for your

thoughtfulness. But tell me what happened?"

"Nothing much." Barry laughed. "It was really very simple. They said they were going to search the place and I said that was fine, to go ahead. I showed them where the bath was and I showed them that little room down the hall that I use for a bedroom sometimes when I don't sleep on this couch here, and while they were snooping around I just slipped back here and locked that window and blew a little dust back so they wouldn't see it had recently been touched. That's all." Barry laughed. "It was just as easy as that!"

"And when they came and looked in that storeroom?" Fay asked.

"They looked at the window and saw that it was locked! They knew you couldn't have locked it after you went through it, so they just grunted and said they'd have to look for you somewhere else."

"But you"—in spite of Barry's smile and cheerful words Fay knew he was deeply troubled—"what is going to happen to you? They are sure you made that phone call!"

"Yes, but they can't do much to me for that. I have given them my word that I wouldn't run away and that I'd be on hand for the inquest. That's all they had a right to demand. And now—here's some good hot coffee. Drink it, child, and then go to bed."

"I can't go to bed," Fay murmured, as she sipped the good hot coffee. "My mind is going around like a whirling dervish. I never could go to sleep in the living world. Talk to me—you said you were going to tell me about Arlette."

"Yes." Barry's face grew sober. "I must tell you about Arlette—you have a right to understand. Though it's a story not known to many people." He paused for a long moment, thoughtfully gazing at the glowing tip of his cigarette.

Fay watched him, her heart suddenly heavy within her. What was the story he was going to tell her? Who was Arlette and what was she to this handsome man sitting opposite her in the firelight? Suddenly there swept back into Fay's mind the scene eight days before, on Fifth Avenue, when Barry had stopped her, thinking she was Arlette. How glad he had been to meet her! How disturbed he had been when he had thought she—or rather—Arlette—was still mad at him! And how his face had lighted up when she said she wasn't mad and that she'd have dinner with him!

Suddenly Fay realized she was in love with Barry! She was in love with him, and she hated, with a fierce and jealous hatred, the thought of Arlette who was, without doubt, a deep interest in Barry's life. Fay herself wanted to be that interest! And all Barry did was to take care of her courteously and call her "child"!

All this flashed through Fay's mind in that long moment before Barry again spoke. But at his first words her heart thrilled with sudden hope.

"To begin with, Arlette was madly in love with Gordon." Barry's handsome face tightened at the thought of his murdered friend. "A lot of women and girls were crazy about Gordon—he was such a jolly, shaggy, sort of big bear of a man. But Arlette simply adored him. She's a queer girl—sometimes she's sort of dull and cold; you wouldn't think anything in the world mattered to her. And then, suddenly, she'll come to life—you can almost see her burst into a flame of living. She'll get all peped up and dance and sing and laugh—she's gorgeous at those times."

Fay listened to this enthusiastic description of Arlette with a sinking heart. When Barry had first said that Arlette was in love with Gordon, Fay had jumped to the conclusion that, if Ar-

lette were in love with Gordon, she couldn't mean anything to Barry. But now she wondered if Barry hadn't been just standing aside for the sake of his friend. Maybe, now that Gordon was dead, he would begin to make love to Arlette himself! Yet, Fay realized with new hope, Barry was sure Arlette had committed the murder. Would a man like Barry love a girl capable of committing murder? Fay looked across at Barry's fine profile, thrown into glowing relief by the flickering light of the fire. There was something so splendid and strong in the long clean line of his jaw, so noble in the sweep of his forehead, and the clear deep light in his eyes. Fay could imagine such a man loving a girl in spite of anything—and truly wasn't a love that forgave everything and loved in spite of everything the only kind of love to have? Surely, if Barry loved her—Fay's heart seemed to turn a somersault at the very thought—she would want him to keep on loving her, in spite of anything. That was the way she would love him!

The lovely color flooded Fay's face at the thought—and then it receded again as her active mind reminded her of Arlette. Did Barry really love her? And had she committed the murder of Gordon Craig as Barry seemed to think? It was all very confusing.

There was only one thing clear to Fay—and that was that she was falling deeper and deeper in love with Barry with every passing second.

"But, crazy as Arlette was about Gordon," Barry continued, "he didn't seem to care much about her. I don't know why it was—and another funny thing was that he never talked to me about her. Of course men don't discuss the girls they know, and I don't want you to think Gordon did. But we were very close friends, and he'd always tell me how he felt about things. But he'd never say a word about Arlette. And she was so wild about him that she'd

tell any one—particularly when she ran into one of these gorgeous wild moods of hers. But Gordon would just laugh at her tantrums.

"She did a lot of posing for him—that was how she met him in the first place. And that was how she found out that Gordon was married."

"Oh!" Fay interrupted, "he was married? Then wasn't that the reason he didn't care much for Arlette?"

"No. Gordon had lots of women friends. He hadn't been living with his wife for nearly three years. And lately there had been talk of a divorce. Gordon got the idea somewhere that his wife wanted to marry again. But the reason he didn't care for Arlette was something deeper than that. I don't know what it was. It may have been something in her past—it may have been—oh, I don't know. But I am pretty sure there was some specific reason why Gordon didn't fall for her. Heaven knows almost any man would have been intrigued by having any one as lovely as Arlette in love with him! But Gordon just shrugged his mammoth shoulders and grinned."

"But why," Fay asked quickly in order to cover up her confused chagrin at Barry's last words, "why, if Arlette were so in love with Gordon, are you so sure she killed him?"

"Because," Barry said slowly, "yesterday Gordon told her he was going back to his wife! I heard him tell her. I was sitting in the studio when she came in. She was in one of her gay moods—she positively radiated life. She came dancing in and, without speaking to me at all, threw her arms around Gordon.

"'Run away, Arlette,' he said impatiently. 'I'm working.'

"'You're always working!' she pouted. 'You never have a second for me.'

"'Cheer up,' Gordon grinned at her over his shoulder. 'I'll have even less

time in the future. I'm going back to Phyllis—we're all made up!"

"I was as surprised as Arlette. Gordon hadn't said a word to me about it and I don't know yet whether it was true. He may have been saying it just to tease her. Anyway she believed it. And she was furious! She rampaged and tore around in the worst fit of temper I've ever seen, and I've seen her in some pretty bad tempers. In fact, I always thought her blazing temper was one of her chief charms—as long as she wasn't mad at me!"

Barry smiled a little; then he went on with his story.

"Well, finally, she made so much noise and was so mad that Gordon picked her up and set her down in the outside hall and locked the door. He came back grinning and, without a word, went on with his painting. Of course it never occurred to either of us—"

Barry relapsed into silence and Fay watched his face. She was puzzled by his attitude. One minute his tone and words made her sure that he was deeply interested in Arlette—probably actually in love with her—and the next he seemed disgusted with her and sure that she had murdered his friend. Finally Barry broke the little silence.

"And that's all I know about Arlette," he said. "That was the last time I saw her—though you say she was there when you arrived this afternoon. Tell me again just what she said and what happened."

Fay described as carefully as she could what Arlette had said to her that afternoon and how excited she had seemed and how wild her eyes had looked.

"But I simply can't believe she'd actually go so far as to kill Gordon Craig," Fay ended. "I can't believe it."

"You don't know how those violent moods took hold of her," Barry answered slowly. "Sometimes she'd be so gay and vivid and full of life, but other

times she'd be passionate and willful and fly into terrible tempers. She's a queer girl, but a fascinating one! But don't let's talk about it any more. You must get some sleep, child. You've had a bitterly hard day and you must be about ready to drop."

Fay said nothing. In her ears were still ringing the words Barry had just spoken, "She was a queer girl, but a fascinating one!" What did he mean? How deeply was he himself fascinated?

But Fay realized she couldn't sit there forever, staring into the fire, and wondering what Barry meant by this, and how he felt about that. He was right, she was tired. She was exhausted.

"I think I'll put you up here in the divan—then you can lock the door and feel perfectly safe," Barry was saying. "I'll go down to that little bedroom down the hall. Though you can go down there, if you like."

"No," Fay decided. "I'll stay here."

Barry, having done all he could for her comfort, said good night and left her, and a few minutes later she was lying, warm and comfortable, on the broad divan, watching the light cast by the dying fire as it flickered on the ceiling.

And then, without even realizing she had fallen asleep, she was awake again. It was broad daylight and the warm golden sun was streaming in through the window.

Fay sat up and rubbed her eyes. What time was it? Mercy, how deeply she must have slept! Not a dream, not a disturbance of any kind—just smooth, bottomless sleep! Fay looked at her wrist watch, but she had been too tired to remember to wind it the night before and it had stopped. But the brilliancy of the sun told her it was late. Where was Barry?—she wondered.

She jumped out of bed, took a shower, and hopped into her clothes. Then she opened the door and peeked down the hall. The door of the little room was

wide open and she could see the tumbled bed where Barry had slept. He had gone! He had actually gone out and left her, alone and unprotected, without a word. Fay, suddenly, felt very neglected and lonely. What did Barry expect her to do? How long would he be gone? And why should he have just disappeared without even leaving a note?

Fay was hungry—and she had just fifteen cents left in her bag. She'd run out and get a couple of rolls and then she'd come back and make herself some coffee. Pulling her hat over her hair and slipping into her coat, she ran down the three long, narrow flights of stairs to the street.

For a moment she stood on the sidewalk, wondering which way to go. Where was the nearest bake shop?

So absorbed was she in her errand that she failed to notice a shadowy hulk of a man that stood on the opposite side of the street, leaning carelessly against a lamp-post. But there was nothing careless about his eyes; little black eyes that darted here and there underneath the shadow of his hat. He saw Fay even if she didn't see him, and instantly his black eyes brightened, and when she turned and walked quickly down the street he followed her.

Fay found a bakery a little over a block away. It was filled with early customers who had evidently run out as she had for their morning rolls. And it was while she was waiting idly for some one to wait on her that she first noticed the big man with the little black eyes. He was standing by the bakery window, pretending to look at the cakes and cookies on display there, but he was

really looking at her! And such a look! Filled with malevolent glee—as if he would torture her and laugh at her at the same time.

For a long second Fay stared at him fascinated. Who was he? And what had he to do with her? For from the first instant their eyes had met, Fay had no doubt that he was, in some way, connected with her. Finally she tore her eyes away from his and, conscious that he was still staring at her through the window, ordered the rolls she had come for. And, though she was trembling with a new inward terror, her voice was steady.

But as the girl turned to count the rolls and put them in a bag, Fay's thoughts were in a whirl. How would she ever be able to get back to the studio? Would he follow her?

The girl handed her the paper bag and, with quaking heart, Fay turned to leave the store. Then she gave a great sigh of relief. The man had gone! He was no longer staring through the window, and when Fay stepped out of the door, she couldn't see him anywhere. Her heart gave a great bound. If only she could get back to Barry's studio! What a foolish, rash little goose she had been ever to leave it!

She started off at a good pace, but hardly had she gone half a block, before she heard footsteps behind her. Fearfully she looked over her shoulder—the big, dark-faced man was following her! Fay, suddenly panic-stricken with terror, broke into a run. But the man's quickened footsteps told her that he was running, too! Oh, what did he want of her? What would he do with her if he caught her? Who was he?

TO BE CONTINUED.

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# Love in a Penthouse

By Gertrude Schalk

ALL the way up to Nanette's penthouse in the smoothly running elevator, Martha tingled with the knowledge that something was going to happen. All that day she had had the same queer half-gone feeling that usually presages accident or adventure. So far there had been no accident, so Martha looked forward to adventure.

Just before she stepped out of the automatic elevator, she stopped to tuck a stray curl behind her ear. Her irregular, wholly charming face crinkled into a smile.

"Martha," she chuckled softly, winking one sea-green eye at her reflection in the paneled mirror, "my funny bone

tells me that something is going to happen to this slightly nondescript girl tonight. If so, I'm exceedingly glad I washed my hair this morning, because after all, if it weren't for that hank of hair, yours truly would be out of luck!"

She was exaggerating, of course, but any one meeting Martha for the first time would exclaim first over the silky softness, the wavy darkness of her hair. After that they would see next the green eyes that narrowed themselves so impishly when she laughed, that hid behind straight dark lashes like cool green precious stones. And one might have written poetry to her lips, but Martha never let any one get that dense about it.

For Martha was a strictly business-like sort of person. A pal, a sister—she'd be either to a man. But as for going further, nothing stirred in her camp.

"Darlings," she'd say sometimes to the gang when they would begin to kid her about her tendency toward friendship only, "I have no heart, except for friends. I'm a cold-blooded business woman."

It was true that she was a business woman, a good one, too, for she managed a small manufacturing concern somewhere in the East Forties and was making good at it.

Being what she was, gave Martha a distinct place in the gang. Of course when one mentioned the gang, one meant naturally the group that whirled worshipfully and perhaps a trifle enviously about Nanette Demorrows throne. Nanette was one of those girls who had everything—wealth, fair social position, beauty, charm, that indefinable *it* that drew men and women into her life with equal ease.

Nanette stood head and shoulders over every woman she met, either consciously or unconsciously. And she had been doing it so long that she took it for granted now that none could supplant her. Being what she was, it was only natural that she preferred her feminine friends to be slightly less beautiful than herself, slightly less charming. Not that she minded competition; she loved it. But as a steady diet, competition was too much to expect any girl to go through every day. So Nanette surrounded herself with merely pretty girls who were hardly any trouble at all.

Of all her friends, Nanette looked upon Martha as the safest one of all. For Martha didn't resort to feminine wiles to secure Nanette's men. Martha didn't care for men. So Martha became Nanette's pal.

Besides, Martha's dark hair and odd eyes made an excellent foil for Nanette's

ash-blond coloring. It wasn't the first time in history that a beautiful and clever woman chose a slightly less attractive girl as a friend.

Martha wasn't stupid by any means. She knew why Nanette was so kind to her, and sometimes her green eyes would twinkle roguishly at a sudden thought. "Suppose I should suddenly turn vampish!"

It amused Martha to think how astounded Nanette would be. But there was small chance of its happening. None of Nanette's current men was interesting to Martha. And besides, Martha had the square-shooting business mind, whose principle was: "Don't betray a friend." She would never willfully steal even a discarded suitor from her friend.

So to-night with a party on in the luxurious penthouse high above the roar of traffic, Martha had slipped into her green chiffon dress—it matched her eyes wonderfully—and started out, firmly convinced that something was going to happen to her.

Her hair smoothed, her nose freshly powdered, she ran across the garden that surrounded the penthouse. Soft music drifted out of the wide-open windows; the low hum of conversation intermingled with the clinking of glasses; there was an occasional burst of laughter. The party was on.

For just a moment Martha hesitated on the threshold, her eyes seeking familiar faces through the smoke-clouded atmosphere. Every one appeared to be there, lolling about on the low divans.

In a far corner, as usual, Nanette held court with half a dozen attentive men surrounding her. She lounged in a specially made blue velvet chair that was a perfect frame for her golden beauty. To-night, clad in a gold tissue hostess pajama ensemble, she was superb. Even Martha, accustomed as she was to seeing her in all her gorgeous costumes, gasped a little.

Even as she looked, a man detached himself from the group. In that moment all that Martha noticed was that he was tall and straight, and shoulders marvelously broad. He bowed stiffly to Nanette, turned and marched straight toward Martha.

Just then some one saw Martha hesitating in the door, and hailed her gayly. One or two others shouted greetings, and on the tide of sound she stepped into the room to collide amusingly with the tall man.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she laughed, crinkling her eyes up at him. She had to bend her head far back to see his face because he was so tall. Then all she saw was his eyes, dark, angry. "Oh," she said again.

There was one little moment when deep silence spread over the room. It happens at the best of parties. And in that stillness the man spoke.

"Why, hello there!" He had a wonderfully deep voice that sounded like a rare cello playing love songs at dusk. At least that was what Martha thought. "Where have you been all evening?"

Martha blinked. The black lashes fluttered amazingly.

"Where—what—" Her voice was barely a breath, and he didn't pay any attention to it.

"Come on out and get a breath of air," he went on lightly, but only Martha saw the pain in his eyes. The room was watching them with interest.

Several prudent souls frowned and looked slyly at Nanette. The girls Nanette asked to her parties weren't supposed to be on such good terms with her latest admirers.

And just before the stranger dragged her back through the door into the garden, Martha saw Nanette's face. It was incredulous, blank, wondering. For a moment Martha wanted to giggle; Nanette did look so absolutely dumfounded. She couldn't have looked more so if the white-bear rug in the

center of the room had suddenly gotten up and growled fiercely.

And then the tall man had whisked Martha into the soft night air and was leading her toward a distant corner of the beautifully kept garden. Once tucked safely in a secluded corner, they faced each other.

"Well!" Martha drew a deep breath. Her heart was behaving outrageously, fluttering wildly under the green chiffon of her dress.

"I—I don't know what to say," he began wretchedly. His hand went up to rumple the sun-bleached hair that had been newly trained to lie flat on his head. "I'm the world's prize idiot! I can't imagine why I had to pretend I knew you." He looked at her in bewilderment. "It just happened like that, out of a clear sky."

Martha didn't say anything. She couldn't. She was strangely breathless. It was difficult to remain calm and cool. All she could do was stare at this man, so tall, so sun-tanned, so handsome, so boyishly appealing.

"She just sat there laughing at me!" His voice was husky; he seemed to forget Martha for the moment. "The rest of those sleek pups were grinning; the whole room was watching her make a fool of me! I was the only outsider, the only stranger there. They were banded together to laugh at me!" He clenched his fist. "That's why I spoke to you, I guess. I had to have some one to talk to, and you weren't laughing at me."

Martha nodded. For the first time in her life she was at a loss for words.

"I hadn't met you before, I know," he went on moodily. "If I had, I'd have remembered you. But I'm sorry I lost my head so." He glanced shame-facedly at her. "I shouldn't have dragged you into it just because I was angry and upset."

Martha swallowed hard, and found her voice.

"That's all right with me, stranger." She made her voice light, gay. "Only you might give me the details."

"That's right, you don't know what it's all about, do you?" He sounded more normal then. "I guess I must seem sort of crazy to you; being out of the civilized world for five years is apt to do that to a man."

They were sitting down on one of the cozy benches. A vine-covered trellis shaded them from the searching rays of

the moon. Dreamy music drifted out to them. The setting was perfect. Everything was just right for a romantic meeting. But the man talked about another girl—Nanette.

Once Martha caught herself sighing wistfully. It was always Nanette!

Hugh McAllister told his story, and it was just like a hundred other stories Martha had heard. But she had to listen and pretend amazement. For one must stick by a friend, even when the



*In a far corner, as usual, Nanette held court with half a dozen attentive men surrounding her.*

friend happened to be a scalping flirt like Nanette.

Hugh McAllister, engineer, had been building bridges in Manchuria for the past five years. He had come back ten days before for a month's holiday and negotiations for another job in South America. The first day in New York he met Nanette, and fell in love with her. She had seemed to love him too.

Martha sighed again. Nanette always seemed to fall for a new man.

Nanette had given Hugh lots of time and sweet words, had even consented to wear his ring. And to-night for the first time she had invited him to meet the gang.

Martha stifled a cry then. An admission to the gang was as good as a farewell ticket. Nanette never exposed her admirers to the dangerous influence of the gang until she had completely fed her own vanity on the subject. In inviting Hugh McAllister to the party she had set her seal of dismissal on him, that is, dismissal as far as Nanette ever let her victims go. She liked to keep them dangling like wooden puppets on a string.

"She was so different to-night," he went on huskily. "She hardly noticed me. When she did she made fun of me, laughed at me!"

His pride was hurt. But he still cared for her. Martha knew how that first coolness affected the majority of Nanette's rejected suitors. They raved and carried on for a while, and then when Nanette called, they went meekly like lambs to the slaughter. Martha knew all about it.

Lots of them confided in her. She was used to soothing wounded pride. Yet now something hurt her. Something made her heart ache when he looked up at her with pain-filled eyes.

"You mustn't take it too seriously," she said softly. "Nanette really doesn't mean to be that way. She was probably only teasing you."

"Teasing—huh!" He looked at her queerly, scuffed his foot on the graveled path. "That's a nice way to tease a fellow."

"Oh, you know how girls are," Martha went on hastily, trying to assure him of something she didn't believe. "Nanette probably is in—in love with you." It was so hard to say that word "love."

"Oh, yes?" His eyes darkened. "She has a funny way of showing it."

"We all show our emotions in different ways." It was terrible. Her voice shook slightly. "Under her cool surface, Nanette is really very sweet."

The man looked at her a long moment without speaking. It seemed that he really saw her for the first time.

"By the way, do you happen to be her sister?" he asked suddenly.

Martha was startled. "Who, me? No!" she said quickly. "Why?"

"Oh, only that you're sticking up for her so." He kept on looking at her curiously.

"Nanette's a good scout, honestly," Martha kept on, trying not to see his eyes so close to hers.

"I'm glad some one thinks so," he muttered savagely, his anger returning. "If she thinks she can treat me—"

"Please don't be too hard on her," Martha found herself pleading. "She'll be different; you'll see later."

"No, I won't see, because I won't give her a chance," he said sharply, standing up.

"You won't give her another chance?"

The man smiled slowly, and his voice was suddenly queerly tender.

"I think you're the one who's a good scout. I wonder if she appreciates it?" He stared hard at Martha, and his eyes were grave.

He stared so long that it made her nervous. No man had ever made her feel so strange inside. She laughed shakily and stood up, fingering her hair.

"Well, I guess we'd better go on in

before they organize a search party." She forced herself to be gay.

"Wait." Hugh drew her back. His hand on her arm made her tingle clear down to the little green slippers, and clear up to the smallest curl on top of her head. "I'm not going back in there."

"But—you wouldn't go home now!" Dismay suddenly filled Martha. To find him and lose him all in an hour was too cruel a destiny.

"But I am," he went on quietly. "And you're going with me."

Martha gasped, felt a warm tide of color sweeping her face.

"But—but—" She felt so dazed and yet so exalted. He wanted to take her home! Maybe he would even ask to see her some time.

"But what?" he demanded. "Don't you want to go with me?"

"Want to go?" she said dreamily. She wanted to tell him she'd go to the end of the earth with him. For just like that, in the flash of an eye, she knew she loved him. "Of course, only Nanette—"

"What about Nanette?" a silky voice just beyond Hugh's elbow broke in lightly.

They started, turned to face Nanette herself, looking like a gorgeous night moth. Her petal-smooth skin looked transparent in the moonlight, and her eyes glowed tenderly.

"Hugh darling, why did you run away from your Nanette?" she purred, completely ignoring Martha. "I've been waiting just ages for you to come back."

Hugh stiffened.

"We are going home," he said shortly.

"Home?" Nanette flung one icy glance at the silent Martha. She ignored the "we," but Martha knew she hadn't missed it. "Why, Hugh dear, you mustn't go yet. We haven't had any time together to-night at all."

Hugh was silent. Martha stepped back. She couldn't help him now. She

couldn't help herself. Like the marines, Nanette had arrived and had the situation well in hand.

"Come on, darling." Nanette pulled his arm gently, and Martha saw him quiver. "The fun's just beginning."

"But I'm taking—" He flashed one glance at Martha, and she shivered as if a cold wind had touched her. His eyes were apologetic, as if he knew he had fallen from grace. "That is, I promised to take—"

Nanette tossed her head. "Oh, don't bother about what you promised to do. Come on inside."

Hugh ran swift fingers through his hair and took a deep breath.

"You really don't want me in there," he said huskily.

Nanette uttered a soft cry of protest. "Hugh! How can you say such things! You know I want you with me—always."

She lifted her face close to his. The intriguing perfume she used drifted over Hugh's shoulder to Martha. And Martha, knowing what was coming, turned her eyes away, her heart aching dreadfully.

Of course Nanette wanted him back now because she thought he had become interested in Martha. She might even marry him. At that thought Martha held her breath. Hugh married to Nanette!

Even then Nanette spoke softly, but loud enough for Martha to hear clearly.

"I'm just looking forward to our wedding day, Hugh dear. Then we'll be together always?"

Martha knew when Nanette went into his arms. She felt it. She quivered as though she had been struck. And then Nanette was again urging him into the house.

"Come on, darling, let's go."

"Just a minute." Hugh stopped, turned to Martha. "I want to thank your friend."

"What friend and thanks for what?"

Nanette sneered contemptuously. "Oh, you mean her?"

Martha shrank under the icy hatred of that voice.

Hugh appeared not to notice Nanette's words or manner. He smiled for the first time, and Martha wanted to cry aloud. He was so sweet!

"Thank you for helping me," he said softly.

Martha forced her lips to smile.

"Oh, that's all right. It wasn't anything."

"Will you hurry,

Hugh?" Nanette was getting impatient.

But still he lingered. "Come on inside," he urged Martha.

"Yes—yes, I will," she promised, knowing well that she wouldn't.

"A good scout always keeps a promise," he went on, holding her gaze with his own, "no matter how hard it seems at first," he added meaningfully. "Promise?"

And Martha nodded. Her throat felt tight; her eyes smarted with tears.

Triumphantly Nanette carried him away. His hair, boyishly untidy, almost touched her smooth waves as they went arm and arm into the house.



Alone, Martha sank back on the bench. Her knees were weak, too weak it seemed, to carry her to the elevator and homeward. Hot tears stung her eyes.

The something she had felt all day hovering over her had happened. She had fallen in love—right off the bat, without blinking an eye! And it had had to be one of Nanette's men. He'd never see a mouse of a girl like Martha after basking in the glow of Nanette's beauty.

Her head went down on her arms; the tears came, blinding her with their bitterness. What a sap she was, falling



***"You don't need to go further," he said calmly. "All I wanted was my ring. It belonged to my mother."***

for a man she'd never see again. That was what she got for dodging love all her life.

And then she heard unsteady footsteps and a voice calling:

"Martha, where are you? Nanny says to come in and stop watching the moon."

It was one of the gang, reeling a little, just a bit noisy. Martha sat up hastily, ran her puff over her eyes, turned up the corners of her quivering lips and stepped into the light.

"Here I am, old boy," she called, and her voice was light and gay. "Am I missing something?"

"And how!" said the boy, grasping her arm. "Romeo and Juliet didn't have a thing on Nanny and this McAllister guy. You ought to see them! It's hot stuff!"

Martha shivered. She didn't want to go into the house again. She wanted to go home and bury her head in the cushions of her couch and cry. Still, hadn't she in a way promised Hugh to go in?

And he had said: "A good scout always keeps a promise, no matter how hard it seems at first."

But he couldn't know how hard it was to keep this promise.

For the second time that evening Martha stood in the doorway and stared down the length of the room to Nanette's throne, but with what different feelings that time!

No one paid much attention to her. They were too busy having a good time. Only Nanette

seemed to notice her. For one brief moment cold blue eyes met and clashed with green eyes, and then Nanette was laughing with greater abandon into the eyes of Hugh McAllister. He was sitting at her feet, his face lifted to her, his eyes glowing.

Even as she looked, Martha saw Nanette bend over and kiss him lightly on the cheek. He made a sudden movement to draw her closer, but she retreated, laughing softly. In that moment Nanette threw a triumphant

glance at Martha as if to say: "See, he's mine again!"

Martha turned away to join a group clustered about the refreshment table. She'd stay only a few minutes and then slip quietly away, she decided. She couldn't bear staying and watching Nanette ensnaring Hugh.

One of the girls in the group hailed her noisily.

"Well, so the little vamp has returned," she laughed shrilly, throwing her arm about Martha's neck. "The little worm has turned into a vamp!"

"Calm yourself." Martha gave her a playful shake.

"Be your age," some one else cautioned the girl with a glance at Nanette. One never mentioned things like vamp-ing in the gang, especially when Nanette was the third party.

But the girl wouldn't be hushed.

"Well, she did vamp Nanny's new man, didn't she? Sure she did!" Her voice rose above the chatter of the others.

Martha bit her lip. "Please be quiet, dear," she soothed, patting the girl on the back. "If you say so, it's so."

"There, what did I tell you?" the girl cried. "She admits it! She vamped him—of course she did!"

Martha slipped out of the girl's arm and made a move toward the door. If she stayed any longer Nanette would be coming down to find out what all the noise was about.

And then, sweetly, Nanette's voice came behind her.

"What's all the shouting about?" She turned her golden head toward the talkative girl. "What's on your mind?"

Sudden silence fell over the room. Instinctively every one held his breath. Those who knew what it was about looked on eagerly, and those who didn't listened curiously.

"We were just talking about Martha's vamp-ing your new man," the talkative girl said boldly. Perhaps she wasn't

so stupid or so filled with wine that she didn't know what she was saying. Perhaps she wanted to revenge herself on Nanette. Who knows? At any rate she faced the cold-eyed woman insolently.

"Vamping my man?" Nanette's lips tightened, and her voice was brittle. "Why, my dear, you must be mistaken. Martha hasn't vamped my man?"

"Really?" The girl sneered. "Well, she did and she admits it!"

Nanette seemed to swell up and burst with rage.

"She admits it?" She was white with anger. "She does, does she?"

She turned furiously on Martha. The group about the dark-haired girl seemed to melt away, leaving her alone to face Nanette.

"You little sneak, trying to steal my fiancé behind my back! You—pretending to know Hugh—you didn't fool me! I knew all the time you were just trying to take him from me, telling him lies."

Martha felt as if she were going mad. To be compelled to stand there and take Nanette's insults when they were undeserved was too much.

"Nanette, you don't know what you're saying," she began.

"Oh, don't I! I know only too well!" The brittle voice rose shrilly. "You thought you'd get him, but you didn't. We're going to be married."

"Then you're coming with me to South America?" Hugh McAllister stepped forward from the crowd, his eyes curiously light. He caught Nanette's hands in his. "You're really going to brave the dangers of the Bra-zilian jungle with me?"

There was a sudden heavy silence. Nanette, apparently startled from her wild anger, could only stare at him wide-eyed. Martha closed her eyes and clung to a chair for support.

At least she was left alone now. All eyes were turned to the couple in the center of the group.

"Nanette, won't it be wonderful in the jungle, just us two with the natives, the wild beasts, and the beautiful swamp orchids—and the black fever—you'll brave them all for me!" Hugh turned to the others, his face glowing. "Isn't she marvelous? She's going to brave the terrors of the untracked jungle just to be with me!"

"I—I—" Nanette swallowed hard, and seemed to forget what she had to say.

Hugh went on enthusiastically:

"Just think of the long, lonesome nights with just you and the darkness above you for cover, perhaps a mosquito netting to keep the flying bugs off your face, but nothing more than that between you and the stars—"

"Oh, stop—stop! I can't bear it—stop, you fool!" It was Nanette's shrill voice. Her eyes were filled with horror; her slender white hands warded him off as if she were afraid Hugh might forcibly take her to the jungles "Did you think for a minute I'd go with you?"

A pin dropping in the silence that followed would have sounded like a bomb. Eyes hardly blinked for fear of missing one move in the fascinating drama.

"You mean—you won't marry me?" Hugh said dully to Nanette.

"Certainly not!" she stormed, forgetting what she had said not many minutes before. "I never intended to. Here"—she jerked a ring from her left hand and thrust it at him—"take your old ring. I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth!"

"Thanks." As quickly as it took to accept the ring and place it in his pocket, Hugh changed. It was suddenly a different man who towered over Nanette's golden head. "You don't need to go further," he said calmly. "All I wanted was my ring. It belonged to my mother. I don't see how I could have been so careless as to let it out of my sight—into the hands of a stranger."

**LS-3C**

Nobody said a word. Only Nanette's heavy breathing sounded through the room.

"I'm glad you didn't take me seriously, Nanette," Hugh smiled down at her. "Because I don't love you—I never did. I was only infatuated for a time. You know any woman seems beautiful and wonderful when one has been looking at men every day for five years."

Some one coughed nervously.

"I have to thank you, Miss Demorow, for asking me to your party," Hugh continued pleasantly, "for if I hadn't come I'd never have met the girl I really love."

And while no one moved or dared breathe, he walked over to Martha and took her nerveless hand in his.

"You know we wild men do things quickly, even to falling in love. So you won't think it strange if I say I fell in love with—" He stopped and laughed ruefully. "By the way, dear, what is your name?"

That broke the spell. A girl laughed hysterically, and some one else took it up until every one was laughing. Under cover of the sound, Hugh drew Martha to the door.

"Come on; let's get out of this," he whispered.

Stiffly Martha got her wrap and followed him. At the door on a common impulse, they turned to look back. Nanette stood where they had left her, her white face ravaged with anger. It would be a long time before she would recover from that night's work.

And then Hugh ushered Martha into the elevator. Down to the street without a word they sped. Once on the sidewalk under the shaded light of the awning, they hesitated.

"Would you mind very much walking a bit with me?" he said humbly. "I've so much for you to forgive me for."

Martha was suddenly cold inside. Of course he hadn't meant any of that he



**"Are you mad?"** Martha flung open the door and stood there, a defiant little figure. **"Go away."**

had told the gang! He had only been saving his face again, using her. And she couldn't stand any more of it. Fiercely she turned on him, jerking her hand from his arm.

"Don't touch me! Don't ever touch me again—I hate you—I despise you! Using me once was bad enough, but twice—before all my friends—"

He took it silently, his head bent. Then he moved nearer.

"I suppose I deserve all that," he said slowly. "But honestly I really meant—"

She didn't wait for him to finish. Quickly, so quickly he couldn't detain

her, she sped away. Around the corner into the darkness of a side street she ran. When Hugh finally reached the corner she had disappeared, and the fast dwindling light of a taxi showed where she had gone.

Through the back window of the taxi Martha saw him standing in the middle of the street, staring after her.

"The hateful thing!" she stormed. "I've given him something to remember, all right!"

Wearily she let herself into her tiny apartment in the Fifties. What an end to a perfectly good evening! She sank down in a chair and the tears started to her eyes. She'd never see him again now—the brute—not that she wanted to see him.

And then some one tapped softly on her door. Martha's head came up swiftly. Who could it be at that time of night?

Cautiously she approached the door and put her ear to the panel.

There was deep breathing on the other side, and then a low voice.

"Martha dear, are you there?"

It was Hugh!

Martha gasped. How had he found her?

"You're there, darling; I hear you," he said, and his voice was a little louder. "Go away," she whispered coldly.

"Open the door," he countered. "Let me explain how and why and when and why I love you, and all that."

"Go away," she repeated, but it didn't seem to have much effect on him.

"Not until I see you," he said uncompromisingly.

"I—I hate you!" Martha stormed, and then listened in a panic for fear he would go.

But he stayed. "You don't hate me; you love me," said he. "And I'm not going to budge a step until you open this door."

"It's too late." Unconsciously Martha had gone on the defensive.

"All right, I'll begin to shout in a minute and wake everybody up in the house." His voice rose.

"Don't! Are you mad?" Martha flung open the door and stood there, a defiant little figure in green. "Go away—"

Then she faltered, for suddenly he reached out and clasped her in his arms, held her tight against his heart while his eager lips sought and found her own. Somehow she forgot to protest. She forgot everything but his arms, his lips, his shining eyes.

"Oh, darling, I love you so," he whispered huskily.

"You don't. Really?" Against his lips, warm, loving she whispered softly back.

"Don't I? I braved going back to that gang of Nanette's to find out who you were and where you lived," he said softly, chuckling a bit. "You should have seen them when I popped back in and asked them."

Martha tried to feel angry, to feel anything but the happiness that surged

through her, but she couldn't. She had to smile and sigh softly in his arms.

"But I thought you really loved Nanette and were only saving your pride," she said wistfully.

"Don't make me laugh," he retorted. "Do you think I put on that show about the jungles for nothing? I knew she didn't want to marry me, and I had to call her bluff so there wouldn't be any trouble when I married you. Besides, I wanted you to have mother's ring, and I was afraid she wouldn't give it to me if I asked for it."

Martha lifted marveling eyes to him. "She wouldn't have given it to you," she said then. "She would have kept it—and you, too, if you hadn't scared her."

"Don't I know it?" he chuckled, drawing her closer. "We might get fooled once, we crazy jungle men, but when we once wake up, just try and put anything over on us."

He touched her lips with his own.

"My sweet—just suppose I hadn't met you!"

Martha closed her eyes blissfully. And she had thought to pass up love for business! This marvelous, giddy, gorgeous feeling; this handsome, adorable man—she'd do anything to prolong the wonder of the moment.

"Hugh, I love you so," she murmured.

His arms tightened; his lips pressed hers deeply, rapturously, as the first gray light of dawn sifted into the hall.





# Lonesome Girl

By Phylis Knight

**G**ILIAN HARPER, putting on her coat and hat in the employees' cloakroom of Marshal & Gilmont, listened wistfully to the chatter of the other girls.

They all seemed to have some plans for the evening. Wanda Sinclair was going to a party, Mavis Allen's fiance was taking her to the theater.

Gilian supposed drearily that she would spend the evening as usual, alone in her room, reading or sewing. Marshal & Gilmont owned one of the biggest shops in New York, but the wages they paid their girls did not allow for much to be spent on amusements.

Because of the warnings her mother had given her when she left home and

came to New York, Gilian always refused the occasional invitations she received to dine or dance with customers whom she served, and who were attracted by her wide gray eyes and slender, supple youth. No good could come of such invitations, she knew, and she never hesitated in her refusals.

Still, life was sometimes awfully dull. The wistfulness in her eyes intensified as she turned to leave the room, and Wanda Sinclair caught the reflection of her expression in the mirror.

"Hello! Gillyflower," she challenged lightly. "What are you doing to-night? Going out with the boy friend?"

"No. I'm not doing anything," she returned. "I shall go home and read."

"Sounds thrilling!" Wanda Sinclair's voice was mocking but friendly. "Are all your evenings as exciting as that?"

"Most of them," confessed Gilian. "You see, I don't know many people here; nobody who would ask me out."

"You don't want to go out any place. Is that it?"

"Of course I do. What makes you say that?" asked Gilian.

"Only that I seem to remember hearing you refuse an invitation to have dinner at Cesari's the other night. The week before that you didn't seem to want to go and see Jack Peter's new show. What is the matter with you?"

Gilian flushed a deeper crimson.

"Of course I couldn't accept that sort of invitation," she stammered, "from men I don't know."

Wanda Sinclair's glance traveled very slowly over her, appraising her shrewdly. Wanda was the most attractive and best-dressed of the girls in the shop, and very popular among her companions.

Gilian secretly envied her good looks, and the many friends she seemed to possess, and had sometimes wondered how she managed to buy so many new clothes out of the same wages that she herself found so inadequate. She supposed that her parents must be comfortably off and that she did not have to live on what she earned.

"A friend of mine is giving a party to-night. How would you like to come with me? There will be lots of fun, and I know you would enjoy it," said Wanda.

Gilian hesitated.

It would be lovely to forget for one evening how dull her life was, to see even for a few hours the other side of life, the side where there was laughter and gayety, youth enjoyed to the full and not slipping by in endless, drab monotony.

But as another thought came to her she shook her head.

"It is good of you, but I couldn't go," she said. "I haven't anything suitable to wear—not a real evening gown."

Wanda Sinclair laughed with careless kindness.

"That doesn't matter," she answered. "I can lend you one of mine—we are about the same size. You had better come home with me now and choose the one you want."

Two hours later Gilian stood gazing with surprise at what she saw in the long mirror in Wanda Sinclair's bedroom.

The mirror itself, an obviously expensive article of furniture, was a surprise. Gilian realized that her guess that Wanda Sinclair was not entirely dependent on her earnings must have been correct, for the whole apartment, where the other girl apparently lived alone, was much more luxurious than she had expected.

There was a large chest of drawers that contained delicate and costly undergarments; from the open door of the wardrobe, rows of dresses were to be seen, lovely dresses from which she had been bidden to choose the one she liked best.

In the end, it had been Wanda Sinclair's choice in which she decked herself. It was a wonderful gown of scarlet chiffon, with a floating skirt of frills edged with gold lace. Gilian herself would rather have worn the white georgette, but the other girl had insisted that the vivid scarlet was just the color to throw into relief her fair hair and wide gray eyes.

It was Wanda Sinclair, too, who darkened her lashes and shadowed her lids with some bluish paste, and put a vivid red salve on her lips that made them a flaming contrast to the creamy pallor of her skin.

The result was amazing, even startling, but it was undeniably attractive.

Wanda Sinclair gazed at the result of

her handiwork with great satisfaction, but Gilian felt a tremor of doubt mingled with her excitement.

The scarlet figure was vivid, arresting, but strangely unlike the reflection to which she was accustomed, so unlike that she felt as if she were gazing at a stranger.

"Now you want a wrap," Wanda Sinclair remarked. "The silver one, I think, will go well with your gown. I'll wear the black velvet myself."

She submitted to being wrapped in a luxurious garment, collared with gray fur, and five minutes later they were in a taxi. Gilian wondered again why a girl who seemed to have plenty of money should work in a shop, but she soon ceased to wonder about anything when she reached the apartment where the party was being held.

It was so large that Wanda Sinclair's apartment seemed tiny in comparison, and the room into which they were shown was furnished in a strange and exotic fashion. The walls and carpet were black, with a golden ceiling lighted cunningly with concealed bulbs. There were several big divans, each heaped with multicolored cushions, green and scarlet, blue and purple, giving the effect of flower beds rioting with gaudy blossoms. Some of the guests lounged on these, and the rest sat on more cushions on the floor, for there were no chairs.

A Chinese servant, who moved about on softly padded feet with trays of sandwiches and cocktails, added to the exotic strangeness of the scene, and the air was thick with scent and tobacco smoke, so that at first Gilian seemed to be gazing at everything through a perfumed mist.

Out of it, a man drifted up to them, clad in a smoking jacket of jade-green velvet. He might have been any age from thirty-five to forty, and Gilian decided instantly that she did not like his face, which was thin and pale, with dark,

close-set eyes and a mouth that was weak and loose-lipped.

But her companion greeted him with easy friendliness.

"Hello, Jimmy!" she said. "I've brought a friend with me. This is Gilian Harper—Jimmy Covell."

"You couldn't have brought anybody more charming," returned the man quickly, his dark eyes darting over the slender, scarlet-clad figure, his lips curved in a smile that Gilian hated. He turned and motioned to the servant. "Here, Man Fu, bring some cocktails."

He seemed amused when Gilian refused to take one of the glasses in which an amber liquid rested; but soon another guest claimed him.

Several people hailed Wanda Sinclair, and the two girls were drawn into the gayety that filled the room, a feverish, hectic gayety, it seemed to Gilian, oddly lacking in real enjoyment.

She had never been in such an atmosphere before, and never seen people like these. The girls were of a type as strange to her as beings from another planet. Young girls, mostly, yet strangely old, with hard, painted mouths and too wise eyes.

The men made her feel uncomfortable, though she could not have told why. Perhaps it was the way they looked at her and spoke.

As the evening wore on Gilian began to wish she had not come, and if she had known how to excuse herself without seeming rude, she would have gone home.

As the general gayety got more noisily hectic she withdrew more into herself, and she was sitting alone in a corner of the room when, toward midnight, a new guest arrived.

Most of the others were dancing, so that she had the divan on which she sat to herself. The concealed lights in the ceiling had been dimmed, leaving her in a soft rosy glow that wrapped her around like a pink veil, softening the

crude scarlet of her gown and the red flame of her mouth, shadowing her eyes into a wistful sadness.

Andrew Pemberton paused for a moment by the door, gazing at her, the odd thought coming to him that he had found a lovely little field flower in a nightmare garden of queer, artificial blossoms, something so fragrantly sweet, so remote from the atmosphere in which it blossomed, that he had a sudden and

quite unaccountable impulse to gather it up and carry it away to clean winds and sunlight.

The thought stirred him strangely, because he was not given to impulses, and his gaze, going slowly from Gilian around the room, registered an even deeper disgust than he had expected to feel.

The picture that met his eyes was so flauntingly crude. The girls were all of



*It was Wanda who darkened her lashes and shadowed her lids, and put a vivid red salve on her lips that made them a flaming contrast to the creamy pallor of her skin.*

a type that he recognized only too well, the men the kind of men who will amuse themselves readily with that kind of girl. He had known it would be like this when he had reluctantly allowed himself to be persuaded into joining the party for an hour or so.

Jimmy Covell was a business acquaintance of his and had been insistent that he should do so. He would have left again immediately if it had not been for the sight of that girl in the dim rosy mist. The girl who was different.

He caught himself up with cynical amusement as the word came into his mind.

Different!

If she were really different, the sort of girl he had first thought her, she would not be there at all, he told himself.

It was only a trick of the lighting that had put that wistful, sorrowful expression in her eyes, made her red mouth seem to droop.

It was an attractive, provocative mouth, he noticed suddenly. She was attractive altogether, dangerously so, perhaps; but, after all, he had come there to amuse himself, to try to forget, if only for an hour, that there was no more joy left for him in life—only an endless, hateful duty to which he had pledged himself.

He decided that Gilian might help him to forget quite easily.

Somewhere in the apartment a clock struck two, but none of the dancers heard it.

In the black-and-gold room somebody was playing the piano, and a girl was singing a song. In a corner of the lounge outside, where Gilian sat with Andrew Pemberton, the air was too filled with a new and throbbing happiness for any sound from the outside world to penetrate it.

She had long ceased to have any wish to go home. Every time she danced

with Andrew Pemberton she knew a silent wish that the night might go on forever; every time he looked down at her with that expression in his eyes that she had never seen in any man's eyes before, a little wave of ecstatic, quivering happiness seemed to surge through her.

"Gilian, do you know that you are a witch?" the man asked softly. "I guessed it when I first saw you, but I did not know then how potent your spell was—strong enough to steal a man's sense, to make him forget."

"Why should you want to forget?" she parried with a mocking provocativeness that surprised herself. "I want to remember."

"That is because you are so young," he returned with a sigh for his own thirty-two years of bitter knowledge and disillusionment.

She laughed, a husky little laugh that made his pulses race.

He bent nearer to her, torn by a storm of emotion that threatened to overwhelm him. The desire to kiss her was almost more than he could bear, and he saw an answering desire leap into her eyes, curve her mouth that had maddened him for hours with a longing that he had fought sternly.

But now he asked himself suddenly why he should fight. He told himself with cynical bitterness that he would be foolish to hesitate any longer.

She was obviously expecting him to kiss her, wondering probably why he had not done so before. He was beginning to wonder himself.

It was with a sort of angry, almost savage resentment against both her and himself that he caught her into his arms and held her closely, intending to take one brief kiss.

But somehow the feel of her lying warm and sweet in his arms, her lips on his, made him forget all else. He kissed her again and again, her mouth and her eyes, the soft curve of her cheek, the

little pulse that beat in her throat. He kissed her until she lay against him in silent surrender, too rapturously happy to move or speak, her whole being one aching, quivering consciousness of an ecstasy that was too sweet to be pain and that yet was oddly mingled with it.

She opened her eyes at last, looked up at him, and murmured his name softly.

"Andrew."

He bent his head to answer, but at that moment there was an interruption.

Two people strolled into the lounge, arm in arm—their host, Jimmy Covell and Wanda Sinclair.

"Hello, Gillyflower!" Wanda Sinclair stifled a yawn, her tone was carefully casual, though her shrewd eyes took in the scene before her. "It is time to go home. Say good night, like a good child."

The shop did not seem real to Gilian. The glamour of that night still threw a witching glow over everything.

Even now, when she was showing dresses to a customer, she was only half in her task, the other part of her thrilling to memories.

Everything was rose-colored and wonderful when one was in love, she told herself, remembering the rapture of kisses. She knew that she loved Andrew Pemberton, and was sure that he loved her, but, of course, he could not tell her so soon, for they had only met that one night.

This evening he was taking her out to dinner.

Her spirits suddenly sank as a distressing thought darted into her mind. She had nothing to wear unless she borrowed Wanda Sinclair's dress again, and she did so want to look lovely in his eyes.

If only she could afford to buy the pale-green-and-silver gown that was shimmering in her hand like moonlight.

At lunch, Wanda Sinclair noticed that something was distressing her friend.

"Gillyflower looks drooping," she said lightly. "What is the matter?"

For a moment Gilian hesitated, then flashed her wide gray eyes to the other girl's face.

"I'm going out to-night and I haven't a thing fit to wear, or any money to buy anything."

"With Andrew Pemberton?" the other inquired.

A vivid scarlet dyed Gilian's cheeks and her friend laughed.

"You're lucky, and I'm glad you're going to be sensible and not waste your time. He has plenty of money."

"You don't think that is the reason he—" began Gilian.

But the other cut short her flaming indignation.

"It would be a very good one," she retorted. "Now about the gown you want. Suppose I lend you three hundred dollars with which to rig yourself out? You'll need heaps of new things if you want to look your best."

Gilian gasped, not only at her friend's offer, but that she should be able to make such a suggestion.

Three hundred dollars! Why, it was a small fortune!

"I couldn't take it," she protested. "I would never be able to pay it back."

The other looked at Gilian's lovely flushed face and a queer smile played around her lips.

"You can pay me back any time," she said. "Anyhow, you may be quite rich soon."

Gilian's cheeks were warmly red now, and there were soft shadows in her eyes. So even Wanda Sinclair had guessed that Andrew Pemberton loved her and would ask her to marry him, she thought joyously.

Why should she not accept the loan? Lovely clothes meant that admiration would glow in his dark eyes.

"It is good of you," she cried. "I shall be sure to pay you back."

She bought the green gown and a wrap of green velvet, with a squirrel collar to match, also silken undies of delicate shell-pink, sheer-silk stockings, and slippers that glittered like her hair when the sun shone on it.

By the expression in Andrew Pemberton's eyes as she faced him across the little table in the gay restaurant to which he had brought her, Gilian knew that the borrowed money was well spent. His expression thrilled her, but made her a little afraid, sending memory leaping to that glamorous night in the black-and-golden apartment when he had kissed her into a quivering ecstasy that was almost pain.

Perhaps to-night he would take her home and in the taxi kiss her again.

"Of what are your thoughts?"

His voice broke in upon her musing, flooding her creamy cheeks with crimson.

"I don't know," she faltered.

"Yet they must have been very sweet to make your eyes as soft as gray velvet," he said. "I wonder if they look like that when you think of me—that is, if you ever do?"

His dark eyes were enveloping her with their disturbing fire. They rested on the throb in the smooth, white throat, on the mouth that had yielded to him its warm fragrance, on the fascinating shadows where her long lashes lay, on the fair cloud of hair that seemed to hold the magical sheen of moonlight.

"I've thought of you quite a lot," she replied. "Have you thought of me?"

He felt his heart begin to race and with it was an odd stirring of resentment, for she had haunted him persistently since they had parted.

"I told you that you are a witch," he said unsteadily. "I think you have changed my will into a magic wand that you twist in your fingers. I am sure that your eyes are fairy lights."

She gave that husky little laugh he loved to hear.

"Are you not afraid of where they will lead you?" she challenged.

"I know where I would like them to lead me," he replied, a throb in his deep voice, his eyes upon her lips.

The little quiver of excitement that went over her was like fire.

"Where?" she whispered.

He bent his head closer to hers to reply, but at that moment a waiter appeared and he looked up sharply.

"You are wanted on the telephone, sir," the man said.

Gilian waited for him to return, wondering what he would have said if he had not been interrupted.

Had he been going to ask her to marry him?—she asked herself shyly.

Into her mind flashed a vision of herself veiled in white, standing beside the man she loved at an altar decked with flowers, while the words were said that would unite them for all time.

When he came back, he sat looking at her for a moment before he spoke.

"I shall have to send you home alone," he said regretfully.

Her heart sank with disappointment. Suddenly she remembered that she had not put her purse in her bag and flushed with embarrassment.

"I forgot my purse," she stammered nervously. "Will you lend me enough for my fare home?"

His face changed quickly. A smile of angry understanding twisted his lips as his old doubts of her came back with the memory of the exotic apartment and the hectic company in which he had first seen her. From his case he drew a ten-dollar bill which he handed to her without a word.

She looked at it for a second in amazement.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "I don't want as much as that. The driver would never be able to change it."

His eyes became singularly luminous



*From his case he drew a ten-dollar bill, which he handed to her without a word.*

for a second, then instantly darkened again as they caught sight of her expensive gown.

"Why won't you take it from me?"

She glanced at him in sheer surprise.

"But why should you offer me money?" she asked.

He opened his lips as if he were going to say something, then shut them firmly.

With a shrug of his shoulders he rose and helped her on with her wrap. A

few minutes later he had put her in a taxi and paid the driver.

As it was starting, his eyes went once more to her. She was sitting in the far corner wrapped in darkness, out of which her face glimmered like a white flower. Suddenly he thought of the first time he had seen her alone on a divan, veiled in a rosy mist, her eyes shadowed into a wistful sadness.

He made a movement as if he were

about to speak, then changed his mind and turned abruptly away, telling himself cynically that she was cleverer than he had supposed.

"I must have that money I loaned you at once," Wanda Sinclair cried excitedly. "You must get it from somewhere. I can't wait. Something dreadful will happen if you don't. I must have it before to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow!" Gilian echoed in alarm. "You don't give me a chance. I—"

There was another impatient interruption.

"I want the money and you must find it somehow or other. It is a matter of life and death to me."

"Very well, I'll get it," Gilian promised desperately.

Some other girls came in, and Wanda Sinclair hurried away, leaving Gilian white with distress.

She had made that reckless promise, but how was she going to fulfill it? She was giving up the problem in despair when an idea darted into her mind at which she grasped eagerly—an idea that made the color drain from her lips as she thought of it.

Several times during the past two weeks she had been out with Andrew Pemberton and, although he had not asked her to marry him, she felt sure that the time was very near when he would do so.

However much she hated it, she must ask him to lend her the three hundred dollars she owed Wanda. After all, Andrew Pemberton loved her and they were going to be married, Gilian thought.

She hurried home to change and then set out for his house, but when she reached the polished door she stood for several minutes before she could summon up sufficient courage to ring the bell. Then spurring herself with the memory of Wanda's agitated face, she pressed the knob.

A second later she was following a manservant across a wide hall into a room that opened out of it.

"I will tell Mr. Pemberton that you are here," he said.

It was the first time Gilian had been in the house of the man she loved, and she looked around the room in shy wonder at the creamy walls, the golden carpet, the rich color of the few pictures, the costly vases filled with flowers, the large comfortable chairs and luxurious settees, with cushions striking a dominant note of color amid the cream and gold, the satinwood cabinets in which glimmered pieces of rare china, the hidden lights that were like veiled sunshine.

The door opened and Andrew Pemberton came in.

"Andrew." She said his name with that husky little laugh that fascinated him.

As he drew nearer to her she saw that his eyes were uneasy and that they held more embarrassment than joy.

"I hope nothing is the matter," he said quickly, taking her hand in his.

"Aren't you glad to see me?" She thought she sensed a faint annoyance in his tone and the gaze she lifted to his was wistful.

"That goes without saying," he said more gently. "When my man informed me that a young lady wanted to see me I never imagined that it would be you."

"I had no time to let you know I was coming," she faltered. "There is something I want you to do for me at once."

His eyes rested on the earnest face, noting its pallor.

"Come into my study," he said. "You know that I will do anything I can for you."

She smiled happily as he led her into a smaller room on the other side of the hall, with book-lined walls and big deep chairs. He drew forward one of them and she sank down into it.

"Now tell me what it is that you want me to do," he invited.

But it was more difficult than she had thought with him looking at her with that troubling, probing regard of his. Also she did not want to tell him that she had borrowed money to buy clothes, and he might wonder why she wanted such a large sum.

He noticed her hesitation and smiled encouragingly.

"You are surely not afraid to confide in me?"

"Oh, no, it is not that. I know it will mean nothing to you." There was a tremor in her voice. "But I hate to ask you."

His heart missed a beat.

Instinctively he knew that she was going to say something that would displease him intensely. He spoke almost sharply.

"What is it?"

That accent in his voice acted as a spur. She realized that if she did not speak then, she would lose her courage and not be able to do so.

"It is not so very dreadful, really," she said bravely. "I want three hundred dollars."

He listened to her with a curious mingling of anger and pain. After all it was only what he had expected, he told himself bitterly. The velvety softness of gray eyes, the warm, intoxicating lips were only a lure to gain gold.

He told himself that it had been clever of her to refuse the ten-dollar bill he had offered her that evening when she had pretended to have forgotten her purse. She had been merely angling for something bigger.

"Why do you pretend to hate to ask me for money?" he said, and the bitterness he felt was in his voice. "It cannot be an unusual request for you to make to any one."

She felt a crimson tide of color mount from cheek to brow.

"What do you mean?" she cried. "You don't think that I am always borrowing money?"

He held her gaze with the contempt of his.

"You don't imagine that I think you earn sufficient at the shop to live as you do?" he said dryly. "I know enough about the cost of things to realize that you couldn't dress as you do on a small salary or keep up with the kind of people whose society you frequent."

She shivered as if with cold. It was a new Andrew Pemberton who faced her, cold and cynical.

"It is such a temptation to buy pretty things when you're always in the midst of them," she returned tremulously. "But I'm going to turn over a new leaf in the future. I thought that you wouldn't mind helping me."

He found it hard to combat the pleading in her voice, harder still to break the spell of big, wide eyes, holding shadows of pain. He must remember in the future that she was the same as other girls who lived for the moment, as dazzled by pleasure as a moth by a flame.

Without another word he went to his desk, and picking up his check book, wrote out a check for the amount. He was returning with it when a rather high-pitched voice in the hall broke the silence.

"All right, Smithers, we'll go into the study to Mr. Pemberton."

The door opened and an elderly woman entered. With her was a girl of about Gilian's age, dark and languorous in her loveliness, exquisitely dressed in a gown that glinted like pale gold as she moved and seemed to light up the clear olive face, the startling contrast of eyes that were purply-blue and a mouth that was deeply, darkly red.

"Mrs. Gray—Alys."

Gilian watched the man she loved greet them.

Was it her imagination or was there really a dark shadow upon his face, embarrassment in his manner?

"I always love to come into this room," the elder woman was saying. "I

tell Alys that she must paint it for me when you two are married. You love painting interiors, don't you, darling?"

For a second everything went dark to Gilian. Suddenly it was quite plain why Andrew Pemberton had shown no pleasure at seeing her, why he had spoken to her with that hint of harshness in his tone.

He had taken her into that room so that the girl he loved should not see her—the girl he was to marry!

Tender words and passionate kisses had meant nothing to him—he had been a rich man amusing himself with a poor girl.

Her anguished gaze went again to the little group by the door, rested on the third finger of the other girl's left hand, upon which flashed a diamond ring. At that moment the eyes, like purple violets, caught sight of her in the deep chair. With a queer expression in them they went from her to the check that the man she was to marry held in his hand.

Andrew Pemberton saw that curious look, and, turning confusedly from one to the other, said with studied unconcern:

"This young lady is my secretary, Alys. She has come on a matter of business that must be attended to at once."

"Oh, I am so sorry we have interrupted you," Mrs. Gray hastened to say. "But I never expected you to be engaged at dinner time. Come, Alys, we will wait in the drawing-room until Andrew has finished his business."

As the door closed upon them, Gilian sprang from the chair.

At that moment she felt that she hated the man before her, goaded by the shameful knowledge that when she had lain in his arms, yielding her lips to kisses that had awakened in her the passion of first love, he had been engaged to another girl, that what had been so real, so sweet, so sacred to her had been nothing but amusement to him.

"Why did you say that I was your secretary?" she demanded.

He hesitated before he replied.

"I had to account for your presence here somehow," he returned.

His answer enraged her the more. He was ashamed of her and that had been the reason, she told herself furiously. She was a girl to kiss, to flirt with in odd moments, but not fit to meet the girl he loved.

"I suppose you were ashamed to say that I was a friend?" she retorted.

"Gilian, how can you think such a thing?" he protested swiftly. "You know that it is not that. She—Alys—might not have understood."

The gray eyes smoldered dangerously.

"What might she not have understood?" she demanded.

"You make it very difficult." His voice sounded hollow. "You must know that she would have thought it odd to find you here, that it would have been awkward to explain—"

"I realize now what you are," Gilian interrupted stormily. "A man without one grain of honor, one shred of loyalty. Nothing matters but your own pleasure. I could kill myself that I have ever gratified it. I could die of shame when I think of those hateful kisses."

He clenched his hands as he listened to her, fighting an almost overwhelming desire to press his lips once more to that mouth that taunted him.

Hateful kisses!

Against his will his blood raced at the thought of them.

He could feel again clinging arms, uplifted lips sweet as rose petals in kisses that had made him forget honor, everything but a girl who had seemed to quiver with love but now derided him.

"You cannot complain," he retorted in answering fury. "I have given you all the things that girls like you desire, a good time—money."

She turned white at his words.

So that was what he thought of her! She had heard the truth at last.

Money!

The word danced before her. The ten-dollar bill he had once offered her, the check upon the table. It was to get flimsy scraps of paper like that that he thought she had yielded him her lips.

She was glad that she knew what he thought. It was better that he should not know the truth, that he should never guess that all she had received for lost dreams was a broken heart.

"It is amusing to hear you talk of girls like me," she retorted. "We have only one name for men like you, and that is cad. There is no excuse for your conduct. You are not starved of pleasure. All the good things of life are yours. Yet to satisfy a whim you betray the girl you love, the girl you are to marry, who is waiting for you in another room. You think that I am out for money, but not all the gold in the world would tempt me to ever spend another hour with you."

The scorn in her voice was like a lash.

"Yet you were willing enough to sell your kisses to me once," he cried.

"It is a lie!" In the words was a furious resentment. "I thought you were a different man from what you are. Now I hate and despise you with all my heart."

He drew nearer to her, his face pale, his eyes dark with pain.

"Go!" he said in a voice that had an odd strangled sound in it. "Here is your hat; your money is on the table."

She snatched her hat from him and, picking up the check from the table, walked mechanically to the door. But before she could reach it, yielding to an impulse for which he hated himself, he seized her in his arms and kissed her.

"It will be hard to forget you," he said, a throb in his voice.

She freed one hand and struck him in the face. She would rather he had

parted from her in anger than call up with kisses the old passion and the old pain.

"Your words and your kisses are an intolerable insult," she cried vehemently as he released her. "I have only one wish and that is to forget you. You will be to me nothing but a shameful memory. As for your money—this is what I think of it."

She tore the check into tiny pieces as she spoke and threw them at his feet.

The next moment the door had closed upon her and he was alone.

Gilian leaned against one of the stands in the dress department.

It was two days since she had gone to the house of the man she loved, and every time she thought of it her heart filled with anger and pain.

It seemed to her that life gave nothing to her but disillusionment and humiliation.

She owed money that she could not repay. Wanda Sinclair, the only girl in the shop who had ever been kind to her, was furious that she had not returned the three hundred dollars she had loaned her, and had quarreled with her.

Why couldn't she have been born rich like Alys Gray?—Gilian asked herself rebelliously, her eyes fixed on the heavy raindrops that were running down the windowpane. She had everything in life that was worth having—money, beauty and love. The good things of life came to her as a matter of course, and she never knew what it meant to be hungry for a good time.

"The manager wants to see you at once."

Gilian started at the sound of a voice at her elbow and, pulling herself together, turned toward the elevator that would take her to the manager's office, wondering apprehensively why he wanted to see her.

A brusque "Come in!" answered her timid knock on the glass door. The

manager was seated at his desk, his face grimmer than usual, his horn-rimmed spectacles pushed back.

"You sent for me?" she hazarded nervously, for there was something in that uncompromising figure that disconcerted her.

"Yes." He fixed her with his keen eyes before he went on. "You are no

doubt aware that we have been missing money and that, until we have found the thief, every one is more or less under suspicion."

She met his gaze with the startled loveliness of hers.

"You don't think that I know anything about it?"

He shrugged his shoulders and made



*"Your words and your kisses are an intolerable insult," she cried vehemently. "I have only one wish and that is to forget you."*

LS-3C

a wide gesture with his hands that might mean anything.

"There is a question I want to put to you. Have you any other means besides the salary you earn here?"

Her surprise deepened. She was annoyed to feel the color coming and going in her cheeks.

"No—I—"

He stopped her.

"Yet I understand that you have been buying expensive clothes lately, a dress from this establishment, for example, that must be quite beyond your means? How do you manage to pay for these extravagances out of your salary?"

Gilian grasped the edge of the table to steady herself, feeling the blood drain from her face, aware that she could not answer that question. If she told this man that she had borrowed money from Wanda Sinclair and bought her things out of that, her friend might be suspected of the theft.

"Well, what have you to say?"

"I've nothing to say." The words came from her trembling lips in a whisper. "But I swear I've never taken any money that did not belong to me."

A grim smile crossed the manager's face.

"It is unfortunate for you that the thefts coincide with your new clothes for which you are unable to account. In the circumstances I shall be compelled to dispense with your services."

A sharp cry broke from her.

"You mean that I am discharged? That you think that I am the thief? That I really stole the money?"

"I make no direct accusation. But your inability to account for your recent extravagances give me no other alternative but to dismiss you. You will be paid one week's salary and there will be no prosecution," the dry voice went on, taking no notice of her interruption.

How she got out of the office Gilian never knew. Like a blind thing she groped her way to the stairs and stum-

bled down them, colliding with Wanda Sinclair in the hall.

The other girl was passing on when something in Gilian's face made her pause.

"Hello!" she said. "What is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"It is not that," she gasped, "I've been fired. The manager thinks I'm the thief and I can't prove my innocence."

Wanda Sinclair grasped her arm.

"Whatever makes him suspect you?"

"The clothes I bought," answered Gilian.

"You didn't tell him that I loaned you the money?" asked the other.

In her distress Gilian did not notice the eagerness in her friend's voice.

"No, I thought it might get you in trouble. Wanda, I don't know what to do. I'll never get another place now."

"Nonsense!" the other broke in cheerfully. "I'll see you through. You must give notice at once to your landlady and come and live with me until you find something."

The unexpected sympathy was like a light in the darkness and Gilian looked up gratefully into the other's face.

"It is awfully good of you, Wanda."

The other girl gave an odd laugh.

"I'm not the sort to leave a friend stranded," she said. "Pack up and move in with me right away."

Gilian sat in a corner of the couch, thankful that Wanda Sinclair had gone out and that she was alone.

She had been in the apartment for several weeks and every day she hated more and more the hectic nights spent in it and Wanda's friends.

The ringing of the bell interrupted her thoughts, but she determined not to take any notice of it. But the ringing went on so incessantly that at last she sprang to her feet in desperation and, going to the door, opened it.

Rupert Clavering, a middle-aged man who was a constant visitor to the apart-

ment, stood waiting. He was a man whom she detested because he had singled her out for his attentions.

Under his arm he held a florist's box.

"Good evening," he said in his suavest tones. "I was afraid there was nobody in. I have brought you a few roses, if you will accept them."

He followed her into the sitting room and sat down, watching her with small, twinkling eyes while she arranged the flowers in a bowl.

"I'd love to take you away from the city and put roses in your cheeks as well as in your hands," he said.

A shadow of annoyance crossed Gilian's face, and her heart began to beat uneasily.

"I shall regret that I have permitted you to come in if you say such things," she protested.

To her consternation he got up and crossed over to her.

"There is more than that I want to say," he said, a curious shake in his voice. "Something I've longed to ask you ever since you first looked at me with those fascinating gray eyes of yours."

She stirred impatiently, beginning to feel angry.

"I dislike compliments intensely and I refuse to listen to them," she said irritably.

"I'm speaking the truth," he returned. "I've never met any one who appeals to me as you do. You're different from the rest of them. And I've come tonight to ask you to marry me."

Gilian turned upon him swiftly. His face was twitching and there was an expression in his eyes that frightened her. He made a grab for one of her hands, but she avoided him.

"Don't touch me!" she exclaimed, a shudder running over her. "You cannot know what you are saying."

"I was never more serious in my life," he retorted quickly. "Haven't I shown you how much I admire you? I made

up my mind to get you from the beginning. This kind of existence is not good enough for you. I'm offering to take you away from it, to give you a beautiful home and everything that a girl wants."

As he spoke he drew nearer to her and, before she could stop him, he had seized her in his arms and was trying to find her lips. White with fury, Gilian wrenched herself free.

"If you dare to come near me again I will scream for help," she cried stormily. "I don't want to marry you or any man. You are less than nothing to me. Go!"

She went to the door and flung it open. For a moment he stood looking at her in baffled passion and sheer amazement. But there was something in the slim, vibrant figure, in the light in the wide gray eyes that awed him.

Muttering to himself, he picked up his hat and went out.

When the outer door had slammed upon him, Gilian threw herself down upon the couch, shaking with dry sobs.

Wanda Sinclair was surprised to find her still on the couch when she came in.

"Hello, Gillyflower!" she said in her old cheery way. "I thought you were going to bed early."

Gilian started up at the sound of her voice. She thought her friend looked excited and that her eyes were brighter than usual.

"So I was. But Rupert Clavering came. He wanted me to marry him," explained Gilian.

Wanda Sinclair surveyed her with pleased surprise.

"That was a piece of good luck. I hope you accepted him."

"Luck!" Gilian echoed the word derisively. "I hate the man, and I told him so."

The other's expression changed to blank amazement.

"You must be mad. You don't mean to say that you are still thinking about Andrew Pemberton?"



*"Don't touch me!" she exclaimed, a shudder running over her.  
"You cannot know what you are saying."*

"No," Gilian cried passionately. "I hate him more than I hate the other."

"You're a queer fish. Love or hate, what does it matter? Rupert Clavering is rich and that is the main thing. He is no worse than Jimmy Covell, and tonight I've promised to marry him."

Into Gilian's mind flashed a vision of a thin, slight man with a flabby face.

"Wanda, you don't mean to say that you are going to marry him?" she gasped. "You can't love him."

"Love?" the other repeated. "You make me laugh. What has that to do with it? I was glad of the chance. Girls who have nothing must use their wits to secure rich husbands. Jimmy Covell is quite a good catch for myself."

Gilian looked at her in horror, realizing for the first time her true nature. Her gaze went slowly from the shimmering gown of gold tissue to the rouged cheeks and lips, the bold eyes.

So that was the meaning of the expensive clothes, and the exotic apartment, the hard, cynical faces, the too wise eyes, the everlasting gayety. Wanda Sinclair and her friends were all out for the same thing—to snare a rich man into marriage.

Gilian's heart throbbed with shame. It was in that set that Andrew Pemberton had first met her, and that was what he would have thought of her.

Sick with shame, she went into her bedroom. Switching on the light, she caught sight of the black bag that Wanda Sinclair carried to the shop lying on the bed. In her agitation she did not notice that the clasp was unfastened, and as she picked it up carelessly a cash bag fell out with a flutter of bills.

As she stooped to pick them up her eyes fell upon the name of her old firm stamped upon the cash bag, and her eyes suddenly dilated with horror.

Like one in a trance she stood gazing at the telltale bag, the scattered money. There was no mistaking that evidence.

It was Wanda Sinclair who was the thief, and she had allowed her to be dismissed from the shop under suspicion. The three hundred dollars she had been persuaded to borrow must have been stolen, too.

With a gasp of horror Gilian buried her face in her hands. She would not stay in that apartment another day.

Gilian dragged herself wearily along the street, feeling faint with the heat and from want of food.

It was several weeks since she had crept at dawn from Wanda Sinclair's apartment after she had discovered the truth. Without references she had found it impossible to get any employment.

There were times when Gilian felt that the struggle was too much for her, and that desperation and hunger would drive her back to Wanda Sinclair, perhaps even into the hateful arms of Rupert Clavering.

Not noticing where her steps were leading her, she stopped suddenly on the outskirts of a crowd around the entrance to a church, a gay, laughing crowd, composed mostly of young girls like herself, who were evidently waiting for a wedding. She could see the red carpet leading down from the heavy church door to the curb.

She had stepped off the pavement when a policeman pressed her back. He was making way for a car that was arriving, and she found herself in the front row of the waiting crowd.

There was a murmur of admiration when the car door was thrown open and, with the glitter of white slippers, the bride stepped out, shimmering like silver in the sunlight.

Gilian's eyes went to her face and then a strangled cry of recognition broke from her.

It was Alys Gray, her olive face wreathed in smiles, her violet eyes shining with happiness, her crimson lips enchantingly curved—Alys Gray!

Gilian repeated the name to herself and her heart seemed to stop beating as the full significance of it rushed over her.

It was not only Alys Gray's wedding she was watching, but Andrew Pemberton's as well.

She still loved the man who in a few minutes would be married to another girl—to that radiant lovely girl in glistening white who was moving along the red carpet to happiness.

The crowd was pressing toward the church door, and she followed it, filled with a sudden wild desire to see the man she loved married, the last act in her pitiful tragedy. She managed to slip into a back pew, conscious of the throb-

bing of music, of the soft sheen of the delicate pink of the bridesmaids' gowns, like a rosy mist out of which came a white figure moving to where love was waiting.

Gilian's eyes went to the golden gleam of the altar, the pale shimmer of lilies. Then suddenly she saw some one tall and broad step forward to meet his bride, and something seemed to snap in her.

Everything went around and around in a black haze. The ground was slipping from beneath her feet. She would have fallen if a man had not suddenly caught her.

When she opened her eyes again, Gillian found herself lying on a couch in a luxurious room that held the scent of roses, and a woman was bending over her.

"Where am I?" she murmured faintly. "What happened?"

"You fainted and the master brought you here. But you are all right now," the woman said soothingly. "Don't worry about anything."

Gilian looked around vaguely with the curious sensation that she was dreaming. The room with its golden carpet and flower-filled vases was oddly familiar to her.

She did not notice the woman slipping away, because her eyes were upon a figure that was rising out of one of the deep armchairs. Andrew Pemberton, her love, coming toward her as he so often did in dreams, with his dark, glowing eyes, and his tender, smiling mouth, and he was saying her name with the old throb in his voice that had always thrilled her.

"Gilian!"

She raised herself upon her elbow with an answering smile upon her lips. With a little quiver of joy she put out her fingers to touch his sleeve. Then, as a warm, firm clasp closed over them, she sprang up with a cry.

"Andrew!"

"Yes, it is I. I caught you in the church when you fainted. Don't you remember?"

She sank back upon the cushions with a low moan. Yes, she remembered. It was just a dream, the luxurious room with its scent of roses, the loved face, the voice that thrilled.

Andrew Pemberton was married!

Then suddenly she sprang up again, pushing back the hair from her brow in sheer bewilderment, wondering if she had gone mad, for the man she loved was still beside her, his face pale, his lips twitching with emotion.

"You caught me? But it couldn't have been you. You were at the altar. You were getting married."

"I was close to you. My dear, did you think that it was I who was marrying Alys?"

He fell upon his knees beside her.

"Gilian," he whispered. "Did you care?"

She tried to turn her head aside, but he held her firmly. A delicate pink flush rose enchantingly from cheek to brow. Very faintly she moved her lips.

"Why do you want to know?" she asked softly.

"Because it means all the world to me," he said. "There is a great deal to explain. I was a brute. But love must be my excuse. I loved you all along, although I fought my love, believing you to be unworthy. But when you tore up that check I realized my mistake. I broke off my engagement to Alys, knowing that it meant no more to her than it did to me. Ever since, I have been searching everywhere for you. Now that I have found you, I shall never let you go."

He gathered her to him, kissing her until she lay breathless and exhausted in the arms for which she had so often longed.

In the warm shelter of them she told him everything, of her craving for a little joy and beautiful clothes, of the

money she had borrowed from Wanda Sinclair, and of her dismissal from the shop. She told him of how she had stolen away from Wanda Sinclair's apartment after she had learned the truth, braving starvation rather than live in it any longer, of her weary and futile tramp after work, of her love for him that was breaking her heart.

"I don't think I should have had the strength to go on any longer," she finished, a sob in her throat.

"It is always darkest before dawn," he whispered softly. "Let us forget the shadows, and only remember that love will light all the happy years that stretch before us," he added as he bent to crush her lips beneath his own.



### FOR LOVE

FOR love, the lips must never spare their giving  
 Whether in silver night or golden day—  
 For in that moment while the kiss is living  
 They speak more love than words can ever say!

For love, the eyes must always glow with caring  
 Down in their depths where human fires start;  
 Within them faith and hunger, joy and sharing,  
 Are messengers come straightway from the heart!

For love, the arms must ever be infolding,  
 Guarding and warding for their dearest one,  
 Leading and guiding, shielding and upholding  
 The beauty of the blessed prize they've won!

For love, the heart must open like a flower,  
 Drink of the sun and give the winds its scent—  
 And in this fashion, through its golden hour,  
 Become life's jewel and love's own sacrament!

BERT COOKSLEY.



# Love Among The Hunters

By W. Carey Wonderly

ROBYNA, had she cared to, might have married Joe King and made her choice between an apartment up-town and a bungalow in a New Jersey suburb. Joe was head bookkeeper for Kenneth Kimberly & Co., the type of young man that is known as steady. Robyna would have been reasonably sure of his affections and pay envelope. But she felt that she wanted something more than just the quiet life of a suburban housewife; she wanted romance.

"You mean you want a movie career," laughed Elsie Wakeman, one lunch hour as the girls discussed their schemes and dreams in the company's cafeteria. "Well, dream on, fair one. I'd be satis-

fied to settle down forever and a day—if the party of the second part was that fascinating Kim Garrett. You can have all the movie stars in captivity; give me Kim. I—I like his looks."

Robyna's long, dark lashes demurely covered her telltale dancing eyes. "Be a little modest, Elsie," she said. "I know of lots of millionaires, too, but I don't even hope to marry them."

"I want you to know," cried Miss Wakeman indignantly, "that it's no more of a pipe dream for me to think of Kim Garrett than it is for you to waste your time mooning over Hollywood."

"Yes, I suppose one is about as remote as the other," sighed Robyna.

Then a newspaper announced a popularity contest which was to give the winner a six months' moving-picture contract, and it looked all at once as if Bobbie stood a better chance than Elsie of seeing her dreams come true. For Elsie had never even met Kim Garrett. He was old Kimberly's favorite nephew, a globe-trotter and social figure, who was more widely known in fashionable sporting circles than in the business world. Newspaper gossip had endeared Kim to Elsie Wakeman, and there wasn't a girl in his uncle's office who wasn't intrigued by the young man's very name. Kimberly Garrett was a bit of a hero and a bit of an idler, but he was their ideal just the same.

"Now if I were only Mrs. K. G., think how I could help you with your movie career," giggled Elsie, over their luncheon of salad and éclairs.

"Yes, if you were—think how easy it would be to forget me!" Robyna chuckled.

She was a slender, vivid girl, as wholesome as ripe strawberries, and at the same time as modern as to-morrow's newspaper. Her hair was bright chestnut, a shade that was at once the despair and envy of every girl at Kimberly's, while her eyes were brown. There were more beautiful girls in the office, yet it was generally understood from the very beginning of the contest that if any one there were to win first prize, that girl would undoubtedly turn out to be Bobbie Mason.

And so they went to work with a will, collecting coupons from the newspapers and sending them in with Robyna's name. For her friends were proud of Bobbie's smart appearance. She was clever, too. Elsie whispered that Mrs. Mason had been a society girl in Virginia before her marriage to Robyna's father. The daughter had an air about her; she was charming, and friendly, and different.

"You know," Joe King said to Elsie Wakeman after closing hour, "I think all this about nominating Robyna for the movie contest is the biggest nonsense in the world. She won't get my votes; that's certain. Why, what would Bobbie Mason do in the movies, anyway?"

"Why not give her a chance and see?" Elsie cautiously suggested.

"You haven't entered your name in the contest," he ventured, frowning discontentedly.

"But what could I do? Don't be a dog in the manger, Joe. It won't help your cause any, and it won't keep Robyna from winning, either. Give Bobbie her chance."

It was a red-letter day among the employees of Kenneth Kimberly & Co., when the newspaper appeared on the street with the screaming headlines which told a more or less interested world that Miss Robyna Mason had captured first honors in the recent contest. Miss Mason was to be awarded a six months' picture contract with Superba at a salary of one hundred dollars a week. If the prize winner made good in that time, she was to be rewarded further.

There was no doubt in the Kimberly office that Bobbie would make good. Even Joe King admitted it grudgingly at last.

"You have everything, honey," declared Elsie Wakeman. "Everything, that is, but the kitchen stove. I wish I'd get my man as easily as you carried off first prize. Remember, if I don't make good in the matrimonial race, I'm to be your private secretary, Bobbie. Secretary to a movie queen—well, I might do worse at that."

"So might I, having you for a friend, Elsie," nodded Robyna.

The company gave Robyna a check for two hundred dollars and a big dance, and it was intimated that she could resume her duties at some future

date if she so desired. That looked as if Kimberly were dubious as to her success in pictures. The thought almost spoiled the dance for Bobbie, yet it was as nothing compared with what Joe King said to her.

They had been dancing, and suddenly Joe had drawn her out on a little balcony and tried to kiss her. Bobbie was far from being old-fashioned, but she couldn't lightly give her lips to a man who meant absolutely nothing to her. She pulled away.

Joe was furious. "You'll go out to Hollywood and the game will spoil you—rub the bloom from you, Bobbie!" he blazed. "When pictures are through with you, they'll ship you home, and," he finished triumphantly, "nobody will want to marry you then."

Robyna had to laugh to keep from crying. The uncertainty of the last few weeks had left her nerves on edge, and while the dance was wonderful, the excitement of it all made her light-headed and very tired. On top of that, Joe King's insulting speech about finished her.

Her laughter bordered dangerously on hysteria. "One thing is certain," she told him, "I'll never come whining back to you. Why, who do you think you are, Joe? Kim Garret, at least!"

Kim, with the gay traditions built up around him, stood for so much in the lives of the girls at Kimberly & Co. Elsie Wakeman wasn't the only girl who dreamed of him. Bobbie hoped that Joe was properly rebuked, and she was even a little glad when the orchestra struck up "Home, Sweet Home," and she knew that the dance was at an end.

"You've all been simply wonderful!" she told the girls and men who crowded around her. "I know I'd never have won the prize without your help. Now I'm going to work hard and try to make you proud of me. Perhaps I'll never be a star, but I'll always feel that you're all my friends."

"Good luck, Bobbie!" they cried, as she ran, misty-eyed, from the hall.

She was alone as she started home. That was the way she wanted it, of course. The new life beckoned so alluringly that Robyna felt she could find no time for boys or for love.

Instead of being sent to Hollywood at once, Bobbie Mason was told to report for work on Long Island, where Superba was making a picture in their Eastern studio. Her screen tests had turned out exceedingly well, and her voice, while untrained for stage purposes, registered clear and strong. A capable, painstaking director could have achieved excellent results with the striking and intelligent Robyna.

Ivan North, a well-known actor, was the star of the talkie under way, and while Bobbie hadn't dreamed of being his leading lady, she did expect something better than was handed her. For the prize winner was relegated to the mob scenes and put to work with the extra girls and men. She was atmosphere, nothing more.

"You've got to learn this business first," growled an assistant, when she approached him for an explanation. "You're an amateur, aren't you?"

Robyna was too proud to complain to the sponsors of the contest. Probably they wouldn't have cared anyway. The whole scheme had been a publicity stunt for the newspaper and the studio. The hundred-dollar salary was cheap enough in return for the large amount of advertising they had received.

"Can you swim, dance, ride a horse, drive a car?" a long, lean, callow youth snapped at Robyna.

She answered "Yes," and he wrote it down in a book. But Robyna would have answered "Yes" if he had asked her if she could fly to Europe and back. Well, she could dance and swim—a little. But she hoped sincerely that the director wouldn't put her to the test.

However, there was no water stuff

for to-day. The script called for a fox hunt, and before Bobbie knew it, she was made up and dressed in smart riding clothes, ready to mount her horse. Certainly she had told the callow young man that she could ride, but who would have supposed he was going to take her casual answer so literally?

"Joe King's trying to jinx me," Bobbie thought, as she stood beside her mount, weak-kneed, waiting for the groom to help her up in the saddle.

The thought of King kept her doggedly at her job. She'd never go back—never! And she recalled what he had said the night of her dance—that no one would want to marry her when pictures were through with her.

Well, pictures weren't through with her yet. She was game; she was sticking. She'd keep well in the background, and if the horse guessed that she had never sat in a saddle before, perhaps he'd be nice and never tell.

There were a number of scenes to be made with the principal actors, and during those sequences Bobbie and the other extras kept perfectly still on their horses. It gave her a chance to become accustomed to the horse, and she told herself that everything was going beautifully. Then came the shooting of the chase itself, with dogs barking, horns sounding, and all the picturesque details of the fox hunt, and Bobbie noticed suddenly that far from being a docile old pet, her mount appeared to know what it was all about, and was eager to be off. She patted his sleek neck and talked to him in a soothing tone as she saw the others doing, but she realized that if she escaped with her life, she'd be extremely lucky.

It made a brilliant scene, however, and Robyna half forgot her fears in watching what was going on around her. The chase led through a magnificent Long Island estate of forests and streams, and neither time nor money was spared to secure a striking picture

of hunting life. The extra girls looked capable and charming; the men were good looking and as proficient as cow-punchers. Everything and everybody but Bobbie was exactly right.

At last they were ready, with half a dozen cameras concealed along the route to photograph the hunters at various stages of the chase. Of course, the principal actors were the most important figures in the drama, but the director had planned to use the extras to give color and atmosphere to the scenes, and there was no escape for Bobbie. Unless she confessed everything, she must ride forth on her hunter with the others—or at least until she fell off.

In the first flush of enthusiasm for her work, however, Robyna quite forgot her fears. She was like her horse, suddenly awakened from a dream by the sound of the hunter's horn. It was a perfect morning, with just the suggestion of frost in the air. Men shouted and girls laughed as they sent their mounts after the imaginary fox. Although she had planned to hang back and bring up the rear, Bobbie found herself caught in the middle of the field and was carried along with the rest of them, racing neck and neck with two of the boldest spirits.

Across a long, level field Robyna's hunter galloped easily with his fair deceiving rider deciding that horseback riding wasn't so difficult after all. Then the stone fence loomed up directly ahead, and Bobbie clutched wildly at the reins, hastily changing her tune. The others took the obstacle at a merry clip, and Bobbie was forced to follow. Luck was with her; she got over safely. But no one had told her that hunting included such circus stunts as that!

Of course, there were other fences; there were bound to be! And there were streams through which the horses waded, sometimes knee-deep. Then and there Robyna swore that if she ever

became a star, she'd see to it that there were no hunting scenes in her picture.

By that time she had dropped completely out of the chase, and was riding along in last place, all alone. She

was looking for fences and figuring out how best to avoid them. And then, quite without warning, she came upon a young man, very gay and handsome in his hunting clothes, who was sitting



*"I think you should have told them you couldn't ride a horse," Robyna half sighed. "But maybe you wanted the job, too."*

upon the ground just beyond a tortuous brook, with a rather surprised expression on his tanned face.

Startled, Bobbie was undecided for a moment just what to do. He looked almost comical sitting there. Then she realized that he couldn't get up. He had been thrown from his horse, and an injured ankle prevented his standing erect. As for his hunter, the animal had wandered off, and was nibbling grass in an adjacent meadow.

"What happened?" asked Bobbie, feeling that she was expected to say something.

"Perhaps you'd better talk to my horse about that," answered the young man. "It's a very painful subject. Really, I should apologize for letting you find me like this, but—here I am."

"Oh, don't apologize," Bobbie said hastily. "I understand perfectly. I was just saying to myself that if I'm ever a star, I shan't ask my company to expose themselves to such danger and—"

She choked; she was trying to climb down out of the saddle and found the distance as high as a skyscraper. One daintily shod foot just couldn't find solid earth. She pointed her toes, and made wide circles, and was conscious of the injured man's gaze. Finally in desperation she let go, and fell all of six inches.

"This is a strange hunter," she remarked with great dignity, putting the blame on the horse.

The young man's eyes twinkled, but his voice was even and respectful.

"I, too, had never ridden that particular horse before. He won't come near me when I call him, and I can't stand on this ankle."

"What can I do?" queried Robyna, distressed at his plight.

"You can get that—that darling horse, if you will." The adjective fairly burst from his lips, and showed all his white, even teeth in a grin.

Bobbie would just as cheerfully have gone to bring back an African lion. Really, there was more to this picture business than making personal appearances and granting interviews.

"I think you should have told them you couldn't ride a horse," Robyna half sighed. "But maybe you wanted the job, too."

He watched her approach the peacefully grazing chestnut and grab at his reins as if she were grabbing for the brass ring on a merry-go-round. But she was very decorative, more than merely pretty. She made a stunning picture in her riding clothes, and quickly he decided that getting out of this mess was going to take him just as long as he could possibly stretch it out.

Bobbie returned with his wayward mount, a little proudly, for he had come with her quietly enough.

"You should have told them," she said reproachfully. "Why, you might have been killed! How did it happen!"

"Oh, I was simply thinking of other things," he smiled, his thought at the moment all for her.

"I detest fences and streams, myself," Robyna confessed. "Or—I don't, either. I'm afraid of them. It's only my good fortune which kept me from falling off my horse, too. Frankly, I've never ridden a horse before."

"And to-day?"

Robyna sighed wearily.

"Well, I was engaged for this picture before I knew what was expected of us. I—I dared not back out. You're one of the principals, aren't you?"

He made an attractively boyish gesture with his hands. "Do I look the part?"

"You look like—some one," Bobbie answered, with a puzzled frown. "I thought perhaps I'd seen you on the screen—or else your photograph—" Unwilling to sail under false colors,

she added quickly: "I'm just one of the extra girls, you know."

"So am I," he returned promptly. "That is—er—one of the extra men. At college they called me Petie, and I hope we're going to be friends and that you'll want to call me that. As for my own name—"

"Please don't tell me," she quickly intervened. "Then, if I don't know it, and I'm questioned about this accident, I won't have to say that so-and-so fell off his horse."

The young man groaned. "Thank you! Please never tell them I did," he pleaded.

"I won't—and I can't, if I don't know your name. Oh, I do hope you won't lose your job—and I hope you'll be well enough to work to-morrow again."

"If this swelling goes down—" he muttered ruefully.

"Go home and bathe it. Take a chance and don't return to the studio to-night. I—I suppose you could say you were lost. If you work faithfully on your ankle all night, you may be able to report to-morrow," Robyna added, looking very wise and lovely.

Petie adored the way she worried about him. He began to consider ways and means of seeing her again.

"Are you going to work to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes, I'm under contract—though it hasn't helped me much so far. But contract or no contract, I'll have to be getting along."

"Yes, I suppose so," he admitted.

Then they looked at each other and hesitated. Blushing though she was, Robyna spoke first.

"If you'll lean on me— Let me help. Put your hand on my shoulder—that's it. If you can only scramble into the saddle and get safely home, then nobody need know, and your job will be safe. If I go back for help—"

"Please don't think of it."

Petie put his hand on her shoulder, and was surprised to discover how

strong she was. Of course, he didn't lean all his weight on her, although merely placing his foot on the ground was like stepping on swords. He hoped he wouldn't make a complete fool of himself by fainting. It was bad enough to have fallen off his horse. She'd despise him utterly. How the ankle hurt, but it was worth the pain because of her!

Finally, up in the saddle after untold agony, he smiled grimly down at the flushed, admiring girl.

"I'm an awful dumb-bell," he avowed.

"If you're not the hero of this picture, you ought to be," Bobbie flashed back. "I can imagine how that hurt. I think you're very brave."

"And I think you're just about wonderful," Petie retorted. "You're such a good little sport. A man couldn't have done more for me—though thank goodness you're not a man," he added under his breath.

"I hope we'll see each other again—to-morrow, Petie," said Bobbie, quickly averting her head.

"I'll be there, if I have to come in a shroud," he answered. Then he said with a wistful note: "Aren't you going to tell me who it is I'm to remember in my prayers? You haven't furnished me with the slightest clew."

"Why, of course," she said with her friendliest smile. "My name is Robyna Mason."

"I know that name!" he cried suddenly.

For a moment Bobbie looked flattered and expectant.

"I've seen you on the screen," Petie added.

She shook her head with a certain sense of disappointment. "This is my first work," she confessed. In spite of all the publicity the newspaper had given her, she was just a little nobody to him.

"Well, there's something familiar

about—" He frowned, yet he could not explain what he meant.

For ten minutes they rode along in silence, retracing their steps. In spite of the disappointing experience of her first day at work before the camera, Bobbie felt happier than she had been in a long while. Her eyes were soft and bright, her cheeks flushed delicately, and her dewy lips parted in a musing little smile. When they arrived at the crossroads, and Petie drew his horse up, she seemed in a dream.

"I think you'd better go back to the studio alone," he said, with more than friendly interest in his voice. "If we're not seen together, no one can question you about me. And I'll be here tomorrow."

"I hope so," smiled Bobbie.

"There's not the slightest doubt about it in my mind," Petie returned. "I'm going right home now and get to work on the injured ankle. You know the way back to the Superba studio, don't you? Well, you can say that you became separated from the others and returned when you saw no chance of locating the company. That's true," he added gravely.

They said good-by, and Robyna rode back to the studio, arriving nearly an hour before the rest of them. But the cameras had caught some fine shots, and the director was in his mellowest mood, with only the cheeriest words for every one. And Petie wasn't missed! At least, nothing was said regarding his absence.

Tired, sore, Bobbie returned to New York in the autumn twilight, just another extra girl, yet far from being dejected or depressed. There was a song in her heart which made older people glance again at her radiant face. Whether she knew it or not, there was love in her eyes.

For one terrible moment the next morning, Robyna seriously doubted if she would be able to report at the studio

that day. Her muscles were stiff from the unaccustomed exercise. But painful though it was, her first thoughts were of Petie. His injured ankle! If he was incapacitated, then her courage and determination to stick it out and go to the studio were all in vain.

For Bobbie looked eagerly forward to meeting Petie again. She didn't try to deceive herself on that score. He was young and boyish and most attractive, and she hoped they were going to be good friends. "Friends" was the word which flashed through Bobbie's mind, but she blushed vividly just the same.

There was a lot of fun connected with this picture business in spite of the fact that she wasn't a star. When they had told her she had won the contest, Robyna had visualized herself riding to the studio in an automobile with a uniformed chauffeur. If she had expected the executives to make a big fuss over her, it hadn't been because of conceit or vanity, but merely what had been preached in the newspaper while the contest was in full blast. Well, she had won the prize, and here she was going to work, hanging on a strap in the trolley, and when she arrived on the lot, she'd be herded away to dress with the extra girls.

"Some movie queen!" Bobbie murmured to herself, but the mere joy of living made her smile. At least, she had gotten away from Joe King's distasteful attentions, and she had met Petie!

It wasn't until she arrived at the studio that Robyna discovered that they weren't going to make any hunting scenes that day. The company was told to be dressed for a garden party by nine o'clock, when busses would convey them to a near-by estate, where the desired sequences were to be made. All the girls were terribly excited over the opportunity to wear smart and beautiful clothes, but Bobbie drew the nicest when the wardrobe mistress divined at

■ glance her real gift for displaying the new fashions. She looked cool and summery in a very long, high-waisted flowered chiffon dress, with a big hat and a parasol.

"You look like the real thing," a cunning little redhead told Bobbie admiringly. "They'll never be able to tell you from the week-end guests when we get to Seabright for the garden-party scenes. You're aristocratic, all right."

Robyna had only heard the one word: "Seabright." That was the name of old Kenneth Kimberly's summer home. It seemed like a good omen to be going there, although she didn't expect to see K. K., or if she did, have him remember her. His company employed so many girls, and, besides, Mr. Kimberly spent only ■ few hours a day at his office.

Seabright, Bobbie knew from pictures and descriptions, was a magnificent estate, but she was scarcely prepared to find anything so utterly lovely as this rich man's Long Island home. There were guests there, but Mr. Kimberly had given the Superba directors permission to shoot the necessary scenes on the terrace and in the garden. The actors weren't to go into the house, there was really no need for them to do so.

Bobbie was chosen to appear in every scene. Also, she was paired off with the best-looking of the extra men. But that meant little to her, since he wasn't Petie, and she couldn't find him. She asked her partner if he knew whom she meant. He shook his sleek, shapely head.

During the making of the scenes, most of Mr. Kimberly's guests came out and watched the actors, commenting openly on what they saw and heard, just as if they were being entertained by trained animals. They were unkindly and critical, yet found it all very amusing. In fact, "amusing" seemed to be society's favorite word. A trio of débutantes found it highly amusing to watch Robyna trying to act like a lady.

Since Bobbie was by far the prettiest, she was forced to suffer the most from criticism.

She felt almost as uncomfortable as she had on the horse the day before. These people's rude remarks and cynical smiles made her self-conscious, and she was glad when she was temporarily free. She strolled into the Japanese garden, waiting until she was wanted again.

She thought she was unobserved until a voice spoke at her elbow, and she turned, startled, to find that a man, one of the guests, had followed her. Even then she was only mildly provoked, not frightened. She wanted to be alone for a few minutes, to wander in the beautiful garden and think of yesterday's happenings.

The man, neither young nor handsome, lost no time in explaining himself to Robyna. He wanted her to have dinner with him. His friends called him "Biff," and he had the fastest car and the biggest yacht around New York. From the moment he saw her, he had fallen hard for Bobbie. All she had to do was to say the word, and he'd show her the time of her young life.

"Thank you," Robyna said quietly. "All your invitations are declined."

After working two years in New York, she fancied she knew something about flirtatious men. Biff annoyed her like a persistent fly.

"A little Miss Hard-to-get, aren't you?" he chuckled, when she turned away. "Listen, honey, if I were to tell you my real name——"

"Your name means nothing to me, and I'm not your honey," Robyna answered. Wishing to avoid a scene, especially at Mr. Kimberly's home, she tried to pass him and return to the terrace where the company was assembled.

But her admirer caught her by the shoulder with such force that he tore the delicate sleeve of her dress. Bobbie cried more with dismay than with



*"You let me believe you were an extra—an actor," Robyna said unsteadily. "You deliberately deceived me."*

pain. How was she to explain the ruined dress? Probably the Superba would ask her to pay for it.

Biff took another step toward her, but that time his hand never touched her. Something quick and athletic

sprang around the dwarf fir trees and something hard and real struck Biff on the point of the chin. He went sprawling, looking every bit as surprised as Bobbie, for she didn't know then that her gallant rescuer was Petie.

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But when she recognized him, she uttered a low little cry of relief and went to him like a homing bird. Apparently neither one of them saw anything incongruous in it until Biff began to chuckle evilly from his position on the cold stones. Then Bobbie and Petie separated self-consciously.

"How's the ankle?" she asked, for something to say.

"At least I can travel around on it," he replied, smiling again.

He was wearing his riding clothes, and she shook her head dolefully.

"We're not making hunting scenes today. I suppose you arrived at the studio after we'd left. Wasn't there any one there to tell you? I'm afraid you'll lose your day's pay check for this."

"I dressed and went straight to the spot where I'd met you yesterday," he confessed unblushingly.

Robyna felt the blood rushing to her cheeks. "Did you?"

"Yes. And when you didn't show up, I hurried back here just in time to catch this—this—"

He fairly glowered at the prostrate Biff, who grinned cheerfully back.

"No hard feelings," said Biff, picking himself up. "I didn't know you'd seen her first."

Bobbie's eyes swept Petie almost anxiously. "Do you—do you know—him?"

"I'm afraid I do," he replied.

"Don't let him fool you," Biff called to Robyna. "Sure, he knows me and I know him, but—do you? He may be just Petie to his friends, but in all the records he's Kimberly Garrett. I've got a sort of hunch you didn't know."

No, she hadn't known; she hadn't dreamed such a thing. She looked at him with reproach in her eyes. Every bit of color had left her cheeks, and her face looked like marble. Old K. K.'s favorite nephew—and she had been so worried over his possible loss of a day's pay!

"It wasn't fair," she said in a low voice.

"What wasn't fair? Oh, I got so sick and tired of being just Kim Garrett!"

"You should have told me."

"But I told you my friends call me Petie, which is perfectly true!"

"You let me believe you were an extra—an actor," Robyna said unsteadily. "Why, you wouldn't have told me today if it hadn't been for that man! You deliberately deceived me."

"Oh, now, Bobbie—"

"Please don't call me that."

"But I've thought of you as Bobbie—ever since yesterday," he cried. "Forgive me. I'm not so bad, really. I was riding, and I fell, and you found me. At first you were just a pretty girl, and it amused me to let you think I was a movie actor. Then, before we said good-by, you were more than just a pretty girl, Bobbie; you were you. I wanted to see you again; I wanted you to like me—me, Petie, not Kim Garrett. I thought if I showed up to-day—and maybe for several days—as an actor, you might come to—to care—a little."

"I wish you hadn't," Robyna said in a hurt little voice. "Somehow you make me feel the way—Biff did when he tore my sleeve. Mr. Garrett, I used to work in your uncle's office before I won a—a prize and received a contract with Superba. I think you ought to know that, because, you see, Petie isn't working extra any longer with me at the studio. That's over with. Good-by."

Under his astonished gaze, she walked away. Before he could take hold of her and force her to listen to him, she was paired off again with the good-looking extra, working in front of the camera.

Even then Petie would have broken in upon the scene, but his friends, seeing him at once, surrounded him. Girls hung upon his arm; men slapped him on the back. Literally he was swept into the house, and Bobbie, unable to

move or express her true feelings, watched him with a forced smile.

"Then you're hunting to-morrow, Gwendolyn?" said the actor, speaking his lines in the play. "How nice! We'll all meet again."

But Robyna knew it wasn't nice at all, and she didn't expect to meet Petie ever again. When the busses arrived to carry the actors back to the studio, Bobbie lingered almost to the last, but Kim Garrett didn't come out in the garden. Noticing her subdued manner, the other girls put it down to her damaged gown and began to sympathize with her or conjured up dire punishments, according to their temperaments. But Bobbie was beyond caring. It seemed that few things really mattered in this world after what had happened in the garden.

There was a distinct thrill in knowing that the Petie of her dreams was none other than the eligible Kim Garrett, ideal of half the girls in the Kimberly office. But there was pain as well, for K. K.'s favorite nephew was an entirely different person from the moving-picture extra she had thought him to be. Recalling Biff's insinuations, Bobbie flushed to the roots of her chestnut hair, but even then she couldn't banish Petie from her heart.

When Robyna turned in her torn costume, the wardrobe mistress was quite irritated, and made a notation on Bobbie's card. She wondered if she would lose her job or if they would make her pay for the dress. But she never heard anything more about it. Reviewing the day's rushes that evening, the director had discovered for himself that Robyna Mason photographed superbly, and, in view of that fact, such trifling matters as ruined clothes were quietly ignored.

It was too late then to give Bobbie a bigger part in the picture under way, but the director at once commenced to plan for the future, a future in which the new girl figured prominently.

"Remember, Miss Mason," he said, "I want you for my new picture. Don't listen to any of the other fellow's promises. You belong to me."

How happy she would have been just a few days before to have heard such words! Now she experienced difficulty in working up the proper enthusiasm with which to thank the director for his kindly interest. Yet there seemed nothing left to her except a career. Romance was not for her.

When she left the studio that evening, and when she arrived the next morning, Bobbie half expected to see a familiar face waiting for her with a plea for understanding and forgiveness. The hope which springs eternal in the human heart had brought her hopefully back to work. Bobbie was young and eager, and loved life very dearly. Happiness and romance walked just ahead, hand in hand, and she longed to overtake them.

"We're going to retake some of those hunting scenes to-day," they told her at the studio. "Everybody into riding costumes for new hunt scenes."

Robyna wasn't sorry. She felt that she couldn't have gone back to Seabright if the company had elected to shoot more of the garden-party scenes. She couldn't run the risk of facing Biff and possibly Petie.

To-day she displayed a greater confidence in the saddle, and was one of the first away when the signal to start was given by the director. She was thinking that she wouldn't care very much if something happened to her. She recalled the busy days she had spent at Kimberly's, humdrum days, perhaps, but heart-free and happy. Now everything, even the promise of success on the screen, seemed so empty. Yet in spite of her heavy heart, Robyna knew that the sweetest thing in her life was having known Petie. The sweetness outweighed the pain, and she wouldn't have missed the experience.



*She could only cling to his neck and whisper a prayer for her safety, but he was running so fast that Bobbie imagined the end must come any minute.*

To-day's scenes were filmed against the same backgrounds as formerly, and Bobbie remembered every brook and hurdle—where she had found Petie, where she had recovered his horse and helped him back in the saddle. It

seemed almost as if she could feel the weight of his hand against her shoulder now. His voice came to her on the breeze, and she saw his lazy smile in the sun patches in the forest.

"Why be a hypocrite, Bobbie Ma-

son?" she said sternly to herself. "You know what has happened to you. You're in love. And millionaire or extra boy, Petie is your man. Forgive him, forgive him!"

But how could she forgive him if she never saw him again?

Suddenly, without warning, her horse bolted. Robyna hadn't noticed the frightened hare which scampered across the path directly in front of her mount. The reins hung loosely, and the hunter raced along like the wind, ignoring the frantic girl's efforts to hold him in. She could only cling to his neck and whisper a prayer for her safety, but he was running so fast that Bobbie imagined the end must come any minute.

She didn't want to die. If she died, she could never explain to Petie that she was sorry for everything! She believed his explanation, and she had let her silly pride cause all the trouble. She loved him. She dug her knees into the hunter's sides and desperately sought a better hold with her hands. The way was uphill and down dale, through a forest and over a meadow, broken with small stream and divided by numerous hedges and fences. Each time an obstacle loomed in front of her, Bobbie closed her eyes and held her breath as her horse jumped over it.

Then, when she was very tired and nervous, she heard the beat of hoofs sailing along behind her. Nearer and nearer they came, this horse and rider who promised aid. It was reasonable to suppose that at least some of the actors in the company had seen her disappear at breakneck speed, and were riding to her rescue. The question was whether or not she could hold on until this person overtook her. She was weakening fast.

And then came a cry of encouragement, a plea to stick it out, a promise of help. There was only one voice in the wide world like that one—Petie's! At the welcome sound strength entered

her veins as if by magic, and she battled dearly for the life which all at once had become doubly sweet to her.

"I'm coming. It's Petie, dearest. Hold on just a few seconds longer, Bobbie. I love you so, I love you. Just a little longer, honey."

He rode like an Arabian chieftain, recklessly, daringly, sparing neither his mount nor himself. With heels and whip Petie urged his hunter forward until his gallant head touched the saddlecloth of his neighbor. He was a much fresher horse than Robyna's, who already had run a mile at breakneck speed, and inch by inch he crept up until the two thoroughbreds were racing as a team.

It was then that Petie reached out. Encircling Bobbie with his right arm, he lifted her out of the saddle, clear and free, and deposited her gently in front of him on his own horse. Not for the fraction of a second had she been afraid. She thrilled to the clasp of his arm and nestled contentedly against his heart, safe at last.

Petie's hold on the rein tightened, and her horse slowed down to a respectable trot. Petie guided him into a narrow bridle path, where he knew the movie people wouldn't follow.

Bobbie could feel the thumping of his heart, leaning there against him, and her lovely eyes were soft with the promise of forgiveness as she turned them to meet his ardent gaze.

"Somehow it seemed so—so right that you should be near when I needed you most," she whispered.

"I want to be always right there when you need me, Bobbie," he answered. "Oh, darling, if anything had happened to you to-day! I'd never have forgiven myself. It's my job to look after you, Bobbie. I adore doing it. I was waiting at the crossroads for you this morning, but you sailed by so quickly. At first I didn't realize that anything was wrong. Then I saw that your horse

was running away with you, and my heart stood still."

"It—it isn't very still at present, Petie," Robyna murmured shyly.

"Of course it isn't, with you in my arms! And every heartbeat is for you, you precious dear! Robyna, what can I say or do to make you believe that I had no ulterior motive in introducing myself as Petie? You heard Biff, dearest—my intimates all call me Petie, never Kim. It gives me—well, I hate all this fuss folks make over Kim Garrett just because he's Kim Garrett. You didn't know who Petie was, dear—you thought I was an extra. And—and I wanted you to come to like that extra, not simply K. K.'s nephew. It was deception, but innocent deception, Bobbie, and I just don't want to go on living if you find you can't forgive me."

She turned slightly in the saddle, and her hair brushed his hair as she inclined her face toward his.

"Please forgive me, Petie," she said. "I guess you didn't do anything so ter-

rible, although it hurt a little at first. It hurt more because Biff was so—so awful, Petie! And my pride suffered. But even before you saved my life, I had reached the conclusion that nothing else mattered in this world except our—our love."

"Our love, Bobbie!" he repeated tenderly, holding her thrillingly close. "That's going to divorce you from your picture career right at the start. Perhaps I'm selfish, wanting you all to myself, when your beauty and talent would give this old world of ours so much happiness. But—"

Her cheek rested against his, bringing a joy and contentment such as neither had ever known before.

"I don't want a career, Petie," Robyna whispered softly in his arms, "unless being your wife is a career."

That time their lips met rapturously. And Robyna, her lips responding to his kiss, felt her heart swell with a love for him that she knew would last until the end of time.



### WALKING IN WINTER

**S**WATHED in late evening's mantle still and deep,  
Walking together, joyous thoughts must keep  
Sweet tryst with ecstasy—for in your eyes,  
I find reflection of love's paradise—  
Through all this winter-time, let hopes awake  
And dreams come true because of love's dear sake!

When through the velvet starry blue of night,  
We watch the moon bring magic with its light,  
And feel the silence like a haunting song,  
Throb wildly through our hearts the dear time long—  
We know the zest in weather cold and clear,  
And walking side by side brings warm hearts near!

PETER A. LEA.



# Bags Of Money

By Rose La Plante

ROGER ROYD fixed a cold eye upon his nephew and uttered a few snorts. His nephew, who was a good-looking young man, clad in a sports jacket and plus fours, smiled hopefully but quailed inwardly.

"In summer, my boy," said Mr. Royd, "anybody with common sense would know that toasters were a drug on the market."

He picked up the sample toaster before him, still keeping his cold eye on his namesake, Mr. Royd Minstrel.

"I'm not saying you didn't buy this lot fairly cheap, but only a dumb-bell with sawdust instead of brains would

have bought such stuff to get rid of in summer, when the human appetite runs to lemonade and ice cream—not to toast."

"But they were so cheap and good I thought they were worth buying to hold over for the winter, Uncle Roger," said Royd Minstrel.

The opulent proprietor of Royd's Department Stores, Inc., spoke more in sorrow than in anger. He pointed out that his business motto had always been small profits and quick returns. For nobody on earth was he going to allow his money to be idle, and to store up a lot of stuff to get tarnished from early sum-

mer to midwinter. He added that as buyer his nephew was the biggest wash-out recorded since Noah's flood, and that his talents would find greater scope doing something else.

"And so," concluded Mr. Royd, "you're fired."

Telling his secretary to obtain a month's salary for Mr. Minstrel from the cashier, Mr. Roger Royd walked out of the office into the crowded department store.

Presently Royd Minstrel found himself standing beside his car, somewhat vague as to his future movements. Being quite aware that in buying goods that were not immediately salable he had been running risks, his discharge had not quite staggered him, although he had expected only a reprimand. What made him rather bitter was the knowledge that his cousin, Alec, would now step into his shoes.

He turned back into the store as a thought born of another thought came into his mind, and found Mr. Roger Royd.

"By the way, Uncle Roger," he said, "I've just remembered something. If you're still thinking of opening a branch at Seacape, you'd better get a move on. The Bradley chain is after a place down there, and if you don't look out they'll get in first."

"Oh, don't be ridiculous!" said Mr. Roger Boyd. "I could buy Bradley today if I wanted to. And your news is old, anyway—I could have told you all that months ago. Perhaps you think I'm walking around in my sleep. But, look here," he added with a slow grin. "Why don't you try and get a job with them as buyer? If you can, I'll pay you fifty dollars a week myself for six months. You'll have them ruined and bankrupt in that time! There's the door in front of you, and the street's outside. Don't come back."

The thought that had brought Royd Minstrel back to the store made him

head his car toward that growing resort, Seacape.

Royd drove cautiously down the steep, winding hill into Applerock, three miles from Seacape, a little town still untouched by the influx of society along the coast. As yet the resort crowd had not invaded it, but people who were less fond of noise had. Many small yachts lay at anchor there, and he found a couple of cars parked before the Anchor Hotel.

He walked up the narrow street, where the ancient houses on the left appeared to be in constant danger of being washed away by the first high tide, and those on the right of being crushed flat by a fall of cliff from above, till he came to the Applerock Inn, a two-story building, with the sun shining on it and roses around the door. Behind was a pleasant garden where bright flowers flourished with their roots almost in the salt water, and tables were set out. And here, on the edge of the sea wall, he discovered an old fisherman who was mending a fishing net.

"Well, Mr. Corbey, how goes it?" asked Royd.

"Terrible," replied the old man. "My knee's bad—got a bad touch of rheumatism again. That doctor wanted to put me on a diet—no meat—he says it's poison to me. If he wasn't the only doctor in the place I'd fire him this minute."

Then from the house came Miss Corbey, with a bundle of white tablecloths on her arm. There was nothing old about Ruth Corbey. She was fair and bobbed, bright-eyed and charming.

"Hello, Royd," she cried. "I thought you were going away on business at the beginning of the week!"

"I finished that business at the end of the week," said Royd. "Let me help you. Do you expect a crowd to-day?"

"We're sure to have a few people," replied Ruth. "We're getting to be known, and on Saturday and yesterday

we were packed. The clips are in the pocket of my apron, Royd."

With a fresh breeze blowing, he helped Ruth Corbey lay the tablecloths and clip them to the tables. She was quite apt at such work, for when Royd had first met her she had been in charge of a tea room quite close to Mr. Roger Royd's New York store.

"So the things's going to be a success, Ruth," he said.

"My part is," she nodded. "Poor auntie tried, but she was never well, and she was too old-fashioned, poor dear. It's a little slow after New York, but I'm getting to like it. The thing I miss most is electricity, especially since uncle has started to have his rheumatism again, but I'm cultivating an amazingly strong arm. Grinding the ice-cream freezer does that."

Ruth crooked her right arm, and Royd pinched the hard muscle admiringly.

"Tough as a prize fighter's," he pronounced. "If you want any turning done on the freezer, I'll be glad to help you. I'm taking a vacation, and I'll just go down and get a room at the Anchor, and then come back and turn for you. If you need a waiter when the crowd comes along, and you'll lend me an apron, I won't mind serving anything they order."

"Don't be foolish—I might take you at your word," said Ruth, smiling. "They're pretty busy at Seacape, and that brings some of the cars here. Seacape is spoiling uncle. Most of the young men have gone there to work, and he can't get anybody to help him with his motor boat or to take people out who want to row. That's what I meant when I said my part was a success. There he goes, poor old fellow."

Old Mr. Corbey had risen to his feet and was stamping about in his boots, clutching his rheumatic left shoulder and making use of pungent language. Ruth laughed and fled into the house with her hands pressed over her pretty

ears. Royd lifted his own outraged hands, shook his head sorrowfully, and went to the gate.

There was a car there, and the driver was just alighting—Cousin Alec himself.

"Hello, Royd," he said. "I didn't expect to see you here. I heard about it, of course, and was very sorry and all that. It was a little hard of the old man to fire you. I'm thinking of buying a little boat for week-ends, and I thought Corbey might get me one fairly cheap."

"Very likely," said Royd. "He's got one or two that he doesn't seem to be doing much with. I'll see you later, probably."

Royd knew perfectly well that Alec detested boats, and that he had not come to Applerock to purchase one, but to see Ruth Corbey. As Uncle Royd was not overgenerous with vacations, it was obvious that Alec was mingling business with pleasure. Probably he had been sent down to Seacape to find a site for a new department store.

"He's got my job, and not satisfied with that, he wants Ruth, too," thought Royd. "He always was greedy, even when he was a kid. And he absolutely can't speak the truth. Why couldn't he have said he wanted a cup of tea or a bottle of ginger ale instead of lying about a boat? Or, better still, he should have come right out and said he wanted to see Ruth."

Suddenly Royd paused and grinned. He slipped back into the garden, where Mr. Corbey, who had recovered from his rheumatic spasm, was again at work on the net.

"My cousin, Alec Wake, is inside," Royd said. "He just told me he wants to buy a small boat, so now's your chance. Any old tub will do—he doesn't know a boat from a bucket—so go after him and nail him."

Royd grinned again as Mr. Corbey hobbled nimbly toward the house. Alec had ordered ginger ale and a packet of

cigarettes. He was talking earnestly to Ruth Corbey.

"Mr. Corbey has the very boat you want to buy, Alec," said Royd, who had followed the old man inside. "Alec has come specially to buy a boat, Ruth. It was nice of him to remember your uncle when lots of other people have boats for sale, wasn't it?"

"Quite sweet of him, especially as we have more boats than we know what to do with," said Ruth, smiling at the victim. "Thank you so much. Let Mr. Wake try the *Ladybird*, uncle. She sails splendidly, and if I didn't have this old ice cream to make, I'd take him out for an hour and show him."

"Go ahead and take him," said Royd eagerly. "I know the boat; she's a beauty. You won't get a better one, Alec, if you search all around the coast.

I'll turn the handle and make the ice cream, and look after the place while you're gone."

Mr. Alec Wake gave a gulp and feebly muttered something about being unprepared for boating. Royd winked at the old man. Shedding her apron and shoes, Ruth drew on a pair of shining rubber knee boots.

"There's a splendid breeze," she said, "and we can run down to the Seacape pier and back easily in an hour. Nobody's likely to come before that. Take care of everything, Royd, like a good boy. See that there's plenty of hot water ready."

With anguish in his heart and his heart in his shoes, Alec followed Ruth into the garden and down to the boat landing.

Royd filled the big copper kettle and



*With a fresh breeze blowing, he helped Ruth Corbey lay the table-cloths and clip them to the tables.*

put it on the stove. As he turned the handle of the freezer, he looked through the open door and saw the boat glide out and bend over as her white sail caught the fresh breeze.

"I hope Ruth will give it to him good and proper," he chuckled, "and teach him to speak the truth. It looks pretty rough out there, so he's sure to be seasick. I wish this handle made music, for I'm so pleased I could sing to it or do a jig."

He worked gallantly until the kettle boiled over with an angry hiss. On inspection the ice cream seemed to be progressing, so he resumed his labors. The boat was coming back after a very brief voyage, which suggested that Mr. Alec Wake, who was no sailor, was already in a state of collapse.

Royd did not wait to gloat over him. He put on his hat, lighted a cigarette, and made for the Anchor Hotel.

When Royd came down from his bedroom, Alec, looking somewhat green and fishy-eyed, was drinking a glass of orangeade. He glowered at his cousin, who smiled cheerfully.

"A nice little boat, isn't she?" said Royd. "I'm glad you bought her, though I rather coveted her myself. Being out of a job, I thought I'd better keep the money in my pocket. When are you going to take me for a sail? You ought to get up a party."

"I haven't bought the old tub," snapped Alec. "I wanted a boat, not a chunk of decayed wood like that."

He banged down his empty glass and went out, his damp trousers clinging around his legs, and Royd chuckled again.

"If he was as sick as he looks," Royd thought, "he won't go after Ruth again in a hurry."

There were thirteen or fourteen people in the garden at Applerock Inn, and Ruth pointed tragically to a note on the dresser as she hurried out with a loaded

tray. Royd read the note, which came from the mother of Ruth's youthful waitress:

DEAR MISS CORBEY: Sorry to tell you Lucy has been stung on the arm by a bee. Her arm is all swollen and she can't come.

Respectfully,

MRS. BILBS.

A car stopped and more people crowded in. Five minutes later, with an apron tied around his waist, Royd was taking orders and serving food as if to the manner born. When the rush was over, a flushed and grateful Ruth patted him on the back and presented him with a bottle of root beer.

"You were just splendid, Royd," she said. "Get your breath—we'll have another crowd in a little while. Are you sure everybody paid?"

"I watched them," grinned Royd. "Not only did they pay, but I got four dollars and a half in tips. This is the life. Let them all come, armies of them, and I'll face them like the hero I am! What happened to Alec, my hated rival?"

"He retired hurt," Ruth said with a giggle. "Who's the girl, then? Do I know her? And what on earth did he want to buy a boat for? A cabbage garden would suit him a lot better."

Royd explained how his connection with Royd's department stores had been severed.

"I've got a notion that Alec pointed out the toasters in the stock book to the old man," he said. "If not, Uncle Roger might not have noticed it till we all turned shivering from ice cream and lemonade to hot buttered toast, and then he would have been drawing the profits. I'm sure Alec played a trick on me, and when he came here bluffing that he wanted a boat, I think I played a trick on him."

"You did, but you didn't sell the boat," said Ruth, who was cutting bread and buttering it at high pressure. "He looked so green and awful I felt quite

sorry for him, but I'm not now. Having spent so much of my life on the water, I suppose I oughtn't laugh at people who—— O Royd, I've got such a glorious idea!"

"You're absolutely glorious altogether," said Royd, as Ruth dropped the butter knife and clapped her hands. "What's this dazzling thought?"

"For you to stay at Applerock while you're looking out for another job and help uncle with the boats—the motor boat especially. We'll soon be getting busy, and he's so crippled. You're a sailor if Alec isn't, and you know about engines as well as sails and oars. Uncle generally gives his man ten per cent of what he takes in, but if you hold out you may get more. And when the demand for boats is slack, you can help me by making the ice cream and things."

"Washing up, cleaning the silver, cleaning the windows, mowing the lawn, exercising the dog, polishing the stove, and taking care of the boats on top of that," said Royd. "May I play golf in my spare time?"

"Here's another big car coming in," said Ruth. "Wake up, waiter, and make tips while the sun is shining."

Royd enjoyed himself. A waiter in plus fours was almost a novelty, but he did not trip, upset trays, or spill things over the visitors. He was so good looking and spoke so pleasantly that, to his tremendous amusement, he found quarters as well as dimes under the plates.

The next day, having come to terms with Mr. Corbey, he took the motor boat down to Seacape to show the authorities that he was capable of managing her, and came back with a certificate in his pocket, identifying him as a navigator qualified to ply for hire.

Ruth did not see him again until the next day, and then she threw up her hands in admiring astonishment as he came toward her.

"What's this, Royd?" she cried. "You look like the owner of a million-dollar yacht."

Royd was clad in white-duck trousers, a well-cut blue coat, and dazzling white shoes. There was a jaunty yachting cap on his head, and there were gold stripes on his blue sleeve.

"My child," said Royd, "when I get a start, things have got to hustle. I've engaged another waitress to help you, and you'll need another before the end of the month. I'm not going to wait here for customers for the motor boat; I'm going to Seacape to fascinate and bring them back with me. Do I look as if I could?"

"You're conceited enough without fishing for compliments, but you really do look nice," admitted Ruth with a smile.

"I'll soon have all those tousled, unshaven pilots in Seacape gnashing their teeth," said Royd. "And the girls! I'll bet you ten cents I bring back a boat-load on my very first trip. All I have to do is stand on the pier and smile, and the pretty maidens will fall all over each other to put to sea in my company."

"They'll all be nearsighted ones!" said Ruth, and laughed. "Well, Royd, I wish you luck, for you're a dear boy and mean well. But don't upset the Seacape pilots more than is good for them."

She stood with her hands on her hips and a smile in her eyes as she watched Royd Minstrel go down to the boat. At the sight of his resplendence Mr. Corbey was staggered. He asked Royd if he was doing it for the movies, but the new pilot only grinned and started his engine. Within an hour he was back again with as many passengers as his license permitted him to carry. He made eight trips that day, and he was a tired man when he moored his boat and came ashore in the dusk.

"How's that?" he asked, taking out a

fat roll of bills and a handful of coins from his pocket.

The old man blinked at the glittering heap, and Ruth rose briskly.

"Oh, Royd," she said, "you're just wonderful! But you look so tired—I'm sure you must be after all that work. I have a nice hot supper in the oven

Ruth and her uncle, it was not profitable enough for a young man of Royd's ambitions. However, it was only for the summer, and summers are often short and fickle. There were pleasant hours after the long day's work, when he sat with Ruth and her uncle before going back to his room at the hotel.



*He looked through the open door and saw the boat glide out as her white sail caught the fresh breeze.*

for you. Even without the boat, it's the best day we've ever had. We're practically sold out of everything."

"Wonderful—wonderful!" grunted Mr. Corbey as he counted up the money. "It will be nine years next week since I started a motor boat, and it never came into my head to go to Seacape and get the passengers."

In a week or two Royd had almost forgotten that he had ever been a buyer for Royd's department stores. The boat and gardens at Applerock Inn flourished amazingly. It was a pleasant life, but though it was profitable enough for

"I'm getting anxious about you, Royd," Ruth said one night as he rose to go. "You've done wonders for us, but isn't it time you began to think about yourself?"

"When I know you've packed plenty away for the winter I'll get busy," said Royd. "If I'm not earning much, I'm earning more than I can spend, for this is such a slave-driving job, I've no time left to spend money. If I'm helping you, I don't care a snap about anything else. And it's all for you and your bright eyes, darling. I rather like old Uncle Corbey, but if it weren't for you,

he could go to Timbuktu and take his whiskers and rheumatics with him."

Ruth sighed a little, but not unhappily. "You must go away at once, Royd," she said. "Jobs aren't so easy to get, and you're just wasting your time and hurting yourself. This isn't your kind of work, though nobody could have done it better, and I want you to get ahead. I'll find a man for the boat somehow, or perhaps uncle can run it, for he's a lot better."

"When you talk like that, I believe you love me just a little," Royd said quietly.

They were standing at the gate in the warmth of the summer night with the shadow of the cliffs lying deep on the narrow street, and the lazy tide swishing against the sea wall.

"That's just why I want you to go away, dear," said Ruth gently, "just why I daren't be selfish and keep you here."

Royd took her in his arms and kissed her, holding her close.

"Now I don't care if it snows!" he said. "I'd love to stay here with you till the summer's over, but you're right, Ruth. Your uncle will start to yell when he hears I'm leaving, but I must look further ahead than Applerock Inn now for both of us. Dear heart, nothing else could happen to me so wonderful as this, but something is going to happen—I feel it in my bones. And I am sure it is going to be lucky."

"Come on, Ruth, I'm tired and waiting to lock up," came the voice of Uncle Corbey from the open window.

Royd went down the dark street with Ruth's parting kiss warm on his lips.

It was Saturday, and it had been a tiring day, and the next day promised to be a more tiring one, but Royd was not sleepy. He had kissed the girl he loved and received her promise, and at the moment the thought of his rather stuffy bedroom at the Anchor was not very enticing.

Being a practical person, he did not turn back to gaze at the light in Ruth's window and serenade her. If he had tried serenading, old Uncle Corbey would have thrown some of the furniture at him.

It was so hot and stuffy in his hotel room that he went out again and sat down watching the twinkling lights of Seacape. He was thinking it was possible that if he approached his uncle he might be given some sort of job, but Alec had wormed his way into Mr. Royd's good graces, so he did not think it probable. With his usual speed, Mr. Roger Royd had opened a branch store in Seacape, and Royd knew that for the time being his Cousin Alec was superintending it.

Alec had not visited Applerock Inn again. He evidently realized that, having made himself supremely ridiculous in the eyes of a pretty girl on whom he had condescended to smile, he was better away.

"When we are married, Ruth could take care of the place for Mr. Corbey in the summer, and I could help over the week-ends," Royd mused, looking into the future. "In the winter, Corbey would have to engage a housekeeper or get married again, if any woman would take him complete with rheumatism and that full set of whiskers."

Royd was about to light a last cigarette when the clock in the tower of the little church struck one in a cracked voice. As the chime died away a humming sound mingled with the lapping of the waves. Few cars took the under-cliff road even in the daytime, for it was narrow and full of bumps. The main road was wide and in excellent condition. To get out of Applerock by the cliff road there was also that difficult hill almost as steep as the spire of a church.

Royd went to the road and saw the gleam of approaching lights. It was a sports roadster, and it passed him with

a whir and plunged bravely up the hills. It managed the first twenty yards of it, and then began to buckle with a groaning engine and a banging exhaust. The driver either did not know Applerock Hill or else he had overestimated the power of his engine, for there he was stuck. And being a good automobile mechanic, Royd hurried forward to try to aid the man in distress with work or advice.

The driver had gotten out of the car. Royd saw him looking around, switch off lights, and then throw an overcoat across his shoulder and crook each arm around some apparently heavy object. Abandoning the car without any effort to restart it, the man began to move uphill at a fast pace.

"A funny game, this," muttered Royd. "Something's wrong. He must be in a mighty big hurry to leave his car in the middle of the road. It's none of my business, of course, but a stunt like this would make any fellow want to play detective. He switched his lights off, too, and left the car right in the center of the road. Does he want to wreck somebody?"

If finding his car unable to climb the hill, the driver had pushed it close to the side of the road and left the lights burning as a warning, he might not have aroused Royd's suspicions.

"Say!" shouted Royd. "Stop a minute! I want you. What sort of game are you playing?"

The man hesitated, looked around, and then started to run. Royd began to run, too, and he was in good condition. The man dropped something that hit the road with a metallic clash, and ran faster. He glanced over his shoulder again, and through the gloom he saw the pursuer was gaining. A second bundle dropped with a similar clash, and Royd kicked against it and nearly tripped. Before he could recover himself, his feet were entangled in a coat that had been dropped with the bundle. When he had

freed himself from the entanglement he found himself alone on the hill.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed Royd Minstrel in amazement.

At his feet lay a split canvas bag, and all around him silver coins were shimmering—dimes, quarters, and half dollars. There were big rolls of bills also, each roll secured by an elastic band. Royd filled his hat and pockets with silver. Farther down the hill, he found another heavy canvas bag that had survived the fall without ripping.

It was no use looking for the one policeman Applerock boasted, for he was on his rounds, probably a couple of miles away. Royd transferred the money to his own car at the Anchor Hotel, threw in the runaway's coat, and drove to Applerock Inn. A light shone in Ruth's window, and when he called her, she raised the shade and looked out.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing very serious, dear," answered Royd, "but why are you losing your beauty sleep?"

"I've been sitting at the window, thinking happy thoughts. But something must be the matter. Why have you brought your car?"

"Wake up Uncle Corbey," said Royd. "There's been a robbery, I think. I want him to watch another—oh, my heavens! Too late!"

Through the silence came the grinding and spitting of an engine. By the time Royd had turned his car and reached the hill, the other car had vanished. He knew the number of it, so the police would be able to trace it. At the gate of Applerock Inn, Ruth was waiting.

"Uncle says he won't get up for anybody, Royd," she said, "not even if the house is on fire. But what's happened?"

"I'm not quite sure, but perhaps this will give some clew, darling," he said. "Let's examine it."

In the living room he began to search through the pockets of the coat, and

discovered a pipe, a tobacco pouch, and a silver cigarette case. Behind one of the rows of cigarettes in the case he found a number of business cards. Royd took one of them out, glanced at it, and made a queer noise in his throat. His

branches. He had been either betting or borrowing money, I imagine. He'd have a passkey, of course, and I imagine he made it look like an outside burglary. I won't go to the police until I hear what my uncle has to say about



*"How's that?" he asked, taking out bills and a handful of coins from his pocket.*

hand shook a little as he gave the card to Ruth. Wide-eyed, she read:

ALEC FERDINAND WAKE  
Representing Royd's Department Stores  
HEAD BUYER

"What does it mean, Royd?" she asked breathlessly.

Royd took her in his arms and kissed her. "I'm not quite sure yet, darling," he answered, "but it looks as if that fool, Alec, went to New York and got away with the cash of one of the big

it. I'll be back in time to run the boat for the last time, precious." He kissed her tenderly, and was gone.

At ten o'clock the next morning, Royd, as spruce and trim as ever, entered Ruth's kitchen, and Ruth ran to him as he opened his arms and stood waiting for her.

"It was Alec, most precious one," he said. "Uncle Roger was furious, and wanted to send all the police after him, but my aunt put her foot down. I've been engaged again at a much higher

salary and with a ten-year contract, so uncle can't fire me."

Ruth looked up at him with wide, radiant eyes. "Oh, Royd," she cried, "that's wonderful! You'll make good—I know you will. You can do anything, darling, anything!"

He caught her close and kissed her soft rose lips. "Even make you love me, sweetheart?" he asked tenderly.

Her eyes met his. "Why, of course!" she told him. "Of course, I love you. Oh, Royd, I've loved you from the very first!"

"And you'll marry me?" There was something masterful and insistent in his tone that thrilled Ruth through and through.

"Yes!"

The next moment his lips crushed down on hers, and he held her in a long, rapturous embrace. "You wonderful girl!" he murmured, his lips on her hair, his arms holding her as though he could never let her go. "You're worth everything in the world to me!"

"Even more than the bags of money you found in the road, the money that changed the tide of your whole career?" Ruth asked, a mischievous little smile on her lips.

"More than anything on this earth!"

And as he caught her to him and kissed her again and again, Ruth knew in her heart that he spoke the truth, and in her heart she was glad.



### NEEDING YOU

I NEED your soft red lips that smile;  
I need your eyes aglow;  
I need the comfort of your glance  
Because I love you so.

I need your laughter, bright and gay,  
Your voice that throbs so low,  
I need your radiance—don't you see?  
It's 'cause I love you so.

I need the music of your song,  
The tender words I know;  
I need the echo of your heart  
Because I love you so.

I need your hand close-linked with mine,  
To know where'er you go  
There will I be—oh, don't you see  
It's 'cause I love you so?

BERT MURRAY FLIEGMAN.



# The Phantom Man

By Evelyn Frankish Stroh

GLEN CAMERON lifted his deep-set gray eyes and looked steadily at his mother across the width of the narrow breakfast table.

"You mean I'd better quit thinking about going to law school this fall?" he asked gravely.

Mrs. Cameron's rather vacuous face registered acute discomfort.

"Oh, you're not going to be selfish about it, Glenny boy."

"Don't call me that," he said sharply.

"I'm sorry. But don't you understand? You're making such good money in the factory, and we all depend on you so."

"Don's out of school. I've stood by him for three years to give him his education at college, and helped Ann

finish. Why can't they work now and help me get what I want?"

"But, Glen, you don't understand. Don will lose prestige if he takes a factory job after all his schooling, and he can't get into the bank here until spring, and then it will only be on a small salary until he gets advancement and some recognition. Then there's Ann. She has made such lovely contacts at school, and this summer she wants to entertain some of the girls who have been so nice to her. We simply can't live on my pension and do the things we should to help her."

"It's hard for me to see that side of it, mother. Haven't any of you thought about my prestige and my desires? Just because I happened to have a good job

the year dad died, it's been up to me to shoulder everybody else's troubles and give up every thing I ever dreamed of doing."

"Well, Glenny, what else could we do?" Mrs. Cameron wailed, tears filling her pale-blue eyes. "Didn't I have enough to bear without struggling through debts and privations. You know I'm doing the best I can. There's no sense in throwing away all that you've done for Don by shoving him into the factory. And then there's Ann. She's so lovely just now, and the friends she had made may help her to make a splendid marriage if we handled things right. She's invited Marice Colby and her brother for the first week in July. It'll be pretty expensive, because they're used to having so much. If you leave the factory now, Ann would have to get a job and that would spoil everything. Jack Colby is interested in Ann and it may mean everything to her. Can't you see what it would mean—marrying into a family like that?"

"Glen dear, you can't be selfish enough to ask her to give that up. Besides, she's already asked them and it's simply out of the question to write and tell them not to come. We've all counted on you, Glenny," she ended tearfully. "You're not going to fail us when you've carried on so wonderfully. Everybody tells me what a wonderful son I have, and I know it's true, but do just go on for another year, dear, please."

Glen, quite overpowered by this breathless avalanche of pleading, shoved his chair back and left his breakfast unfinished.

"Oh, all right! All right!" he protested in bewilderment. "I won't argue, mother. Good-by."

He was out of the house, before his mother recovered her breath, and the startled look in her blue eyes turned slowly into one of tearful resentment.

"Oh, dear," she sighed into her cof-

fee cup, then setting it down in sudden distaste, she wiped her eyes with her napkin.

Glen felt angry and sullen. He was disgusted that his family should descend to social jugglery. Ann—trying to land this Colby kid! He was probably a sap, Glen thought, with a cash box hung onto him. If Ann married him, he hoped the Colby cash would float away. Why couldn't she marry one of the home fellows instead of putting her nose in the air and aiming for a Pasadena swell?

Glen looked on grimly while Ann and his mother labored to put their pleasant old home into what seemed to them an appropriate state of smartness for the reception of the Colbys. To Glen it seemed that they only succeeded in removing whatever charm the rambling old house held, and he went out in the evenings more frequently to keep from erupting his pent feelings.

And yet when his mother begged him for some of his savings, which he had been carefully hoarding toward his coveted law course, he shut his mouth on the useless protests that rose to his lips and gave her enough for a new rug and some dining-room chairs.

He worked later each night to make up for it. The weather was hot and stuffy, and he usually got home tired and cross to find a warmed-over supper awaiting him.

One evening when he came in later than usual, he found the house a mass of bright lights from top to bottom and a gay crowd of young folks in the living room, dancing to the music which came over the radio. Going around to the back door he quietly tiptoed into the kitchen and on the table found a note telling him to use the back stairs so that he wouldn't run into the guests in his working clothes.

It was like a slap in the face, though Glen knew that he had only himself to blame for the fact that he hadn't been

told when the Colbys were arriving. He had been rather on the outs with his mother and sister lately and had not invited their confidences.

He finished his supper hastily and was just getting up from the table with the thought of going up to his room, when the door from the dining room opened and one of the most charming girls he had ever seen walked into the kitchen. When she saw him, she stopped short with a startled cry of, "Oh!"

An ironic sense of humor drove Glen to drawl:

"I ain't a tramp, lady. Just the man of all work."

"I—oh, I see. I beg your pardon. I went through the wrong door I'm afraid."

"Yes, ma'am."

She withdrew hastily, leaving Glen to curse his own idiocy in putting himself in such a position. But her distaste had been so evident that the rôle seemed obvious. What would Ann say, if told of the encounter? Would she have the decency to stand by him or would she leave him in the hole he had made for himself?

Glen was drinking hot coffee, which he had made himself as usual, when Ann, in a new soft negligee, pushed open the same door which had yielded the startling beauty the evening before, and the instant's feeling that it might be the same girl upset him so much that he slopped the hot coffee down his clean shirt.

"What do you want to come sneaking in like that for?" he demanded of Ann hotly. "You've made me spill my coffee all over my shirt and it's my last clean one." He suddenly looked up at her suspiciously. "Why such an early riser," he asked, with a touch of sarcasm.

Ann flushed. "I got up early to tell you a few things. Heaven knows I lay

awake all night wondering what to do. What on earth ever made you tell Marice Colby that you were the hired man?"

Glen set his coffee cup down so hard that it cracked. He set his jaw firmly before he replied to his sister's question.

"She looked so disgusted when she stumbled in on me, that I thought I'd better fit the part. Why blame me? I didn't invite her, and you'd given me definite orders to keep out of sight in my factory duds. Who's to blame? I told her that to save your pride."

It wasn't true, but it came near enough to be to send a flaming banner of red across her face.

"Glen Cameron! You're a perfect beast. As if I'd want you to do a thing like that. Can you blame me for not wanting you to come in in your factory duds? Out here—Marice coming on you out here—that was different. You might have explained that you'd been out late looking after some workmen or something. Now—well, you've just got to stick to what you said and keep out of things. Mother and Don agree it's the best way out."

"Agreed on and condemned, eh? I like that. So you never told her she'd made a mistake and that I was the old piece of shoe-leather you were dancing so high on."

"Oh, I hate you, Glen Cameron. Feel that way if you want to. You've brought it all on yourself—acting like poison over everything we've tried to do. Of course I didn't tell her. If you'd seen her face when she came back into the room and whispered in my ear!"

"What'd she say?" Glen demanded uncomfortably.

"She said, 'I've just been scared out of wits, Ann. You shouldn't keep scarecrows in the kitchen to frighten snooping guests. I went through the wrong door and, whoops, I nearly fell

over. I thought he was a tramp but he explained he was just the hired man, so I tried not to faint.' What would you have said in my place?" Ann ended grimly.

Glen bent over his breakfast.

"Nothing!" he bit out savagely. "Keep your guests out of my way and I'll keep out of theirs, but it won't take much more to send me to the ends of the earth. You'd like that right now, I know, but who'd pay the bills when the romance ~~was~~ over?"

It was Ann's turn to have nothing to say. She vanished abruptly, though not too silently, and Glen gulped down a little more coffee and left for work.

He found it easier than he expected to avoid contact with the visitors for the rest of the week. His room was on the upper floor, which he shared with Don, and he left a note on the kitchen table for his mother, telling her he would eat supper downtown while the guests were there.

Saturday afternoon he put in some more overtime work on the rearrangement of his department, but Sunday morning loomed as something of a dilemma. He finally planned to sneak down early as usual for breakfast and get away before the family got up, and he and the old tin lizzie would hunt solace in the wilderness down by the Santa Ana River.

He managed it nicely, and was off while the dew still glistened on the lawn, with the flivver rattling joyously over the road, and a new can of tobacco, a book, and some fishing tackle on the seat beside him. Glen sighed with contentment as the outskirts of Pomona slid into the background.

Down the river in a quiet spot he found it even more lovely to just lie on the sand of the river bed and let the day wander by while he read himself to sleep. He was suddenly tired. He hadn't realized how the steady grind had worn on him.

Oblivion took him for a while, and he woke blinking, to stare into the face of Marice Colby, looking very lovely, but a little white and tired and he thought frightened, as she clung to the underbrush through which she had evidently just plunged.

He knew in an instant that she did not recognize him in his summer sports clothes. His face was clean, too, he thought grimly.

"I beg your pardon!" the girl gasped, trying ineffectually to back up the slight bank, down which she had slid. "I—I—I think I'm lost. That is—my friends—they're somewhere along here—or were. We were walking and I went back for something without telling them. I think I went too far and some way missed them."

The words stumbled out of her breathlessly, as if she were afraid to talk to him, and yet had to say something to cover up her confusion and fright. But Glen noticed, as he sprang to his feet and tossed back his hair, that she seemed to relax a little as she looked him over.

"I—I see," he stammered, more troubled for words than she. "They—they can't be far away unless they swam across the river. How long have you been hunting for them?"

"Why, it seems ages, and I think I must have walked miles. You see there was a bunch—four cars—and they wouldn't know if I was along or not. We all just scrambled into any car we liked and rode around from place to place. I'm afraid they've gone, and they won't find out that I'm missing till long after they get back to Pomona. Do you know any place near here where I could telephone?"

Glen hesitated. He didn't want to frighten her, and yet he didn't have the least desire to reveal his identity. Yet there wasn't a house anywhere near, and probably no telephone for miles.

Would she be alarmed if he offered



*An ironic sense of humor drove Glen to drawl: "I ain't a tramp, lady. Just the man of all work."*

to drive her back to town, he now wondered.

Something of his embarrassment must have shown in his face, for Marice suddenly relaxed and ceased torturing the willow branches beside her.

"Oh," she suddenly said, "I am so glad I found you. I was really getting frightened. It's so lonely down here, and when I nearly fell over you I thought you were a tramp. I'm sorry if I've seemed stupid."

Glen laughed frankly in relief.

"I should apologize for frightening you," he said, stooping to brush the clinging sand from his trousers, and picking up his book. "I was sound asleep and didn't hear you coming till

you plunged down the bank through the thicket."

He looked into her eyes and felt a queer sensation of sinking into their gray-blue depths. She was lovely, this slim graceful daughter of wealth; lovely to look upon and quite different from the girl he had pictured her. He cursed his stupidity anew in having built a wall of misunderstanding between them.

"If you wouldn't mind," he said diffidently, "I'll be glad to drive you back to Pomona. My car's somewhere up here in the woods near the Corona road."

"Oh!" He was glad to hear that the note of fear had gone from her voice.

"You're ever so kind. But—won't it be out of your way?"

"Not at all."

"I'm afraid you're just being kind."

"Truly I'm not. I'd really appreciate it if you'd give me the chance. I—I live in Pomona."

"Oh, do you? Then that's fine, and I'm very grateful to you."

"Thanks a lot. We'll have a bit of rough walking, but I'll help you through the thickets and we'll take our time."

She made no silly gestures when he offered his assistance, but accepted his hand or a touch on her arm in a matter-of-fact way that charmed him.

What a contemptible idiot he had been, judging Ann's friends before he even saw them. If they liked Ann enough to spend ten days in their unpretentious home there must be something real about them, and he might have known it from the beginning. If only his mother and Ann—but then even that was natural, their trying to make things nice for guests who were used to nice things.

He knew the whole thing was his fault, and he faced the fact frankly. He admitted to himself as he steered Miss Colby an uneven course through the trees, that he deserved just what had happened.

The sun was low and it had grown quite cool, and riding in the open car was quite uncomfortable. Glen pulled off his coat and urged the girl into it, feeling a little anxious about Marice in her thin silk sports costume.

"Oh, no! Please don't do that," she protested. "I'm all right and it's not your fault I got left behind."

"It'd be my fault if I let you catch cold when I could help it," Glen retorted. "Don't worry about me. I'm hard as nails."

"That's awfully nice of you—er—Mr.—"

"My name's Glenn," he blurted uncomfortably.

"Thank you, Mr. Glenn. My name is Colby. I live in Pasadena, but I'm visiting Ann Cameron in Pomona. We were college chums. Do you know where she lives?"

"Yes, Nocta Street."

She settled into the seat comfortably, and the old car rattled on. Glen was glad of the noise. Glad, too, that the old boat required careful steering on the unfrequented roads he purposely chose to avoid meeting any of his sister's crowd. He was too busy puzzling over what he should do when he reached Nocta Street, to consider immediate conversation.

"I beg your pardon," he apologized, suddenly realizing that she had said something.

"I said I wondered if you knew any of Ann's crowd."

"Some of 'em, but not very well."

"I'll have Ann invite you over."

"Thanks. I'm sorry, but I'm terribly busy right now—doing overtime work. No time for social stuff."

"But you're not working to-night. Won't you give me your phone number? I know she'd love to have you come over to-night. You've been so nice to me, and it would really be fun to know you."

"Thanks—just a lot!" He felt his face going brick red. "But it happens I can't to-night. I have another engagement."

"Oh, bother. Can't you break it?"

It was adorable, having her eager about knowing him. How he hated himself for the mess he'd got into, but how utterly futile seemed any course of attempted extrication. He took one side-wise glance at her and caught the warmly lighted eyes and eager mouth smiling at him so generously. His heart missed a beat and he came full upon a right hand turn in the road so suddenly, that he had barely time to swing the flivver to avoid running into an approaching car.

He passed it safely, but the strain on his own car was so great at the speed they were traveling that he blew one of the rear tires. The car skidded to the side of the road and calmly came to rest in the wide ditch at the side, sinking over with a lurch upon its side and throwing them abruptly, though not violently, in a heap upon the sloping bank.

For a moment Glen was too confused to do anything, and even when he recovered a measure of volition, he lay a moment with his arms about Marice, wondering how they came to be there. He had no recollection of catching or holding her, yet it seemed so utterly and eminently the state to be desired that he hated to relinquish her.

Then followed a long moment of uncertainty. Why did she make no effort to move? Was she more stunned than he? Was she dead?

His satisfaction vanished, and he tried to free himself.

Instantly she cried out. "Don't—my foot's caught in the brake. I think it's broken or sprained. Oh! Push me back the other way, quick."

Blunderingly, he tried it too quickly and evoked another cry of pain. Just then there was a screech of brakes and two men got out of a big car and slid down the bank to help them.

"Hurt any?" the first arrival demanded.

"Loosen the lady's foot—carefully," Glen gasped.

"Gee! Sure is wedged in. Hey, Bill, lift her up a little so I can work it out without hurting her. I don't think it's hurt much, though."

Between them they extricated Marice without much distress and Glen made her sit on the bank while he pulled off her slipper and stocking and examined the bruised ankle, while the men managed to get the flivver back on the road. It was slightly muddy but little the worse for the spill.

Glen found Marice's foot pretty badly bruised and slightly swollen. He bound it as tightly as he dared with his clean handkerchief.

"I'm so mortified. I'll never forgive myself," he murmured, looking miserably up into her white face. "You'll wish I'd left you at the river."

Marice managed a little broken laugh.

"It's not your fault. Besides, I'm sure it isn't broken. It's not nearly so bad since you bound it. I believe I could walk."

"You're not going to try," he retorted, putting her slipper into the pocket of his coat that she had on, and getting to his feet. Before she could protest he had her in his arms, and the exhilaration of holding her made his shaken nerves tingle from head to foot and sent a wave of energy through his whole being. He felt just then that he could have walked with her the six miles to Pomona.

He lengthened the moment by the simple pretense of finding an easier slope up the bank, walking several yards up the road before clambering out and then back to where the men were looking the flivver over.

"Hey! Why didn't you holler?" the man named Bill demanded, then noticing the color that mounted in Glen's face, he winked at him behind Marice's back and helped Glen place her in the car.

"We changed the tire, and the engine seems O. K.," the other man said. "Better try her out before we leave you, but I bet she runs. A lizzie has as many lives as a cat."

Glen wiped his muddy hand on his trousers and reached for his wallet, but the man pushed it back.

"No, you don't, son. No obligations. Glad we happened by. Courtesy of the road, you know, and all that stuff. Hop in and get her going."

"That's mighty nice of you, sir.

Thanks a lot." Then without thought of consequences Glen added, "I'd like your names, to remember you by."

"Sure—mine's Stevens and this is Bill Barnes. What's yours?"

It was barely an instant that Glen hesitated, but it seemed a long and dreadful interval before he managed to force from his lips rather more loudly than necessary his full name, Glen Cameron.

There was no use to lie, he thought. His face felt as though it were on fire as he blundered in beside Marice Colby, and wondered what the two men thought of him.

He didn't really care what they thought. It was what Marice must think of him that mattered most. Well, it had to come out, anyway. If he'd lied now it would only have made it worse when he drove her home and helped her into the house. Her hurt foot had finished any chance he had of further escape.

He stepped on the starter. The engine roared, and in a moment, with waved farewells, they were off down the road.

Glen pretended absorption in the effort to drive carefully and avoid jolting his companion, but he knew that Marice knew that he was just ashamed to look at her.

Cool as the evening had grown his whole body felt on fire and his head reminded him of the days when he had typhoid. He was burning with shame and distress, but there seemed to be no words to fit the occasion. If only he knew what she were thinking!

He tried once or twice to glimpse her face, but it was turned away from him and a little down against the wind, his coat collar up around her throat. He could only see the corner of her mouth, set a little grimly against pain—pain that he had furnished her by tipping her into a ditch. Her sports suit was torn and dirty and her hands scratched.

Great guns! How she must detest him.

A worm—that's what he felt like—a silly, squirming worm that somebody ought to step on.

The longer he kept his feelings to himself, the more difficult he found it to voice them, and the more complicated the thing looked to him. He felt choking with things that ought to be said, and stifled by the impossibility of saying anything right. Heartily he wished himself in Tunket, wherever that might be, and his irritation finally stirred around till it included once more his mother and Ann.

He wouldn't have made a fool of himself like this if they hadn't set the stage, he thought. They'd put the whole family in a false position, pretending a higher standard of living than was either their custom or their right. They'd built a cardboard castle—built it on him at that—and the whole darn thing was cluttering down about their ears.

"Serves them all right," he said to himself savagely, but it didn't make things any pleasanter for him.

Glen wondered afterward how he managed it, but after those six miles of silence, the close approach to home must have burst the bonds that bound his tongue.

"I know what you're thinking," he blurted thickly as he slowed the car and chugged up Nocta Street toward the house. "It can't be much worse than what I'm thinking myself. If I could, I'd kick myself from here to China and freshen the landscape for you. I suppose it makes me look a little more of a piker to say it wasn't all my fault, but it's the only relief offering itself at the moment. I got shoved into a mess and I was too mad to dig myself out, so I tried to wipe myself off the family chart."

The girl stirred, twisted a little, and looked at him from under her long lashes in the dusky light.

He caught her eyes. She was laughing, and the dancing merriment in her eyes was matched by a throaty gurgle that startled him so that he almost wrecked the car a second time. He jammed on the brakes and came to a sudden halt under a big tree.

"It's nice of you to speak first," she laughed, then went off into another peal of laughter at his blank amazement.

"I've been trying to think up something adequate to say in the way of an apology ever since we tipped over," she explained uncomfortably. "When I knew who you were, I was so ashamed of myself for acting the way I did that night, I couldn't find a word. You must have thought me a horrible snob."

"Snob!" Glen blurted it in horrified denial, as if he had never connected such a thought with her. "I never thought of blaming you. I looked bad enough to scare any one that night, and I've felt so cheap ever since that I've tried to keep out of sight. It was hard doing it, too, after I realized what a chance I was missing."

"Let's laugh," she suggested with an infectious gurgle, and went off into a musical peal that challenged his sense of humor. When the gay duet ended it seemed to Glen that he had known Marice for years.

"Dare I tell you now," he asked bluntly, "just what I really think about you?"

"I'm dying to know. But wait—don't say it yet. Listen. I'm going to tell you all the dirt about what I thought of Ann's phantom brother, then you've got to promise me to tell me just what you thought about me, and whether you've changed your mind or not."

Even in the darkening twilight Glen's face looked red. He squirmed under her dancing eyes.

"Tell me," she demanded.

"You tell me, first. Make it bad to give me courage."

"All right. Here goes. I thought you were the family goat and a sort of an uneducated diamond-in-the-rough person from the way Ann spoke of you in school. She said so much about how good you'd been to her and your mother that I had you all tricked out as one of nature's noblemen, and when Ann told me that first night that you were away, I was horribly disappointed, but I never dreamed of linking you up with the tramp I found in the kitchen. What on earth had you been doing that night?"

Glen's head went up and his chin took a higher angle.

"I'm a foreman at Taft's. I've worked there ever since the war. It's a dirty job, but I'm not ashamed of it. It's kept the family afloat since dad died, and if I don't weaken it's going to land me in law school. I ate without stopping to clean up that night because I was sore. I thought Ann had cut me out purposely, and I resented her having company she was ashamed to have see me.

"I didn't know who you were when you walked in, but I had you all on the firing line that night, because Ann had left a note telling me not to come through the house in my working clothes. Of course she was right, but I couldn't see it just then, and when you walked in on me I thought your nose tilted as you looked me over and I blurted that fool thing at you in answer to the tilt."

Marice lay back against the seat and laughed aloud.

"Convicted!" she cried. "You did think me a snob. I knew it. I believe you still do."

"I do not," he defended uncomfortably, the red rising in his face again.

"Well what do you think? You promised to tell me the truth. All of it, please. No hedging, Mr. Glenn."

"You didn't tell me your opinion about me."

"No, but I led off. If you square

your shoulders and tell the truth I'll even the odds and do the same."

"Honestly?"

"Cross my heart and hope to die."

Glen put his hand up and twisted his shirt collar free of his neck.

"You won't like it," he got out thickly.

"Try me."

He sat a moment swallowing hard, then mustering sudden and rather amazing courage, stumbled into speech.

"I think you're the most adorable girl

I ever knew in my life, and if I had anything in the way of a bank roll to offer you I'd start in making love to you and never give up till I won out. As things stand, I can't do a thing but just gaze at you from afar and wish I had some sort of magic to put you in the Cinderella class and me in the proud prince rôle, and I feel like all sorts of a cad saying even that much to you."

He dared not look at her as he finished, and he was rather appalled by the silence that followed.



*Before she could protest he had her in his arms, and the exhilaration of holding her made his shaken nerves tingle from head to foot.*

"There," he got out in tense agitation, fumbling for the ignition key, in a panic to get going and end their foolish confessional, "you've got a whole lot more to base your opinion on. Go on and lay me to rest. I'll take it standing, and I won't flinch. I feel like a contemptible cur and you can't make me feel much worse. Tell me, as you promised, just what you think of me now."

Marice's small hand caught his as it fumbled for the key in the darkness. Her fingers closed about his gently but firmly.

"I think you're a whale of a good sport, Glen," she said softly, "and I wish you would."

"Would what?" he stammered staring at her in complete bewilderment.

"Start in making love to me," she whispered. "And don't stop till you've finished law school. Then we'll make love to each other."

"Marice! You mean it?"

She laughed softly.

"Mean it! Why, Glen, I've been in love with you ever since I saw your picture on Ann's bureau at school. The only reason I didn't recognize you is because the photographer made you too handsome, and of course you were a kid in that picture. I like 'em big, and strong, and sort of not too finished, now that I'm old enough to appreciate character, and you're worth two of your brother Don, who seems to be the idol of your mother's eyes."

"Mother dotes on him. Though she doesn't realize it."

"Mothers are blind I guess, but girls in love aren't, despite the legend. Glen, you're still thinking me a snob if you think bank rolls have any drawing power with me. I've been fed all

my life on money, and I made up my mind long ago that the first fellow with everything else I wanted, who had the courage to tell me he liked me, was going to weigh a lot more than all the money I've ever seen. And if you're worrying about any wad you think dad may hang on me, it may interest you to know that I'm going to accept it, all right, but we're not going to live on it. It's going into something lasting and useful that you and I will discover between us. Now what do you think about us."

"I can't think about us—yet," Glen said huskily. "I'm too busy thinking about the wonder you are. Why, Marice, you've turned the world topsy turvy for me, ever since I held you in my arms, there in the ditch."

"Then why not repeat the process," Marice gurgled happily, "and see if the old world turns over again."

Glen looked at her calmly a moment, then suddenly he bent and took her in his arms, and drew her slender loveliness close to him.

He held her so for a long moment, and his heart was beating so fast that he was sure she must hear it.

"Darling, I love you," he murmured so low that if she hadn't been listening very hard she would never have heard him. "I love your charming ways, your sweetness, your——"

A low chuckle from Marice made him stop. "Why don't you kiss me, Glen, instead of telling me how sweet I am."

"I—I was kind of afraid to," he admitted shyly, "though Heaven knows I wanted to." He gripped her fiercely and his lips hovered for a moment over hers, then crushed beneath them the red softness that was Marice's.



# One-man Girl

By Maysie Greig

A Serial—Part VI

## CHAPTER XIII.

**G**IN was already dressed for traveling when Stenson opened his eyes the next morning. She had on the gray cloth coat and the little gray hat that rolled softly back onto her forehead. The same outfit that she had arrived in yesterday. Yesterday—a thousand years ago, it seemed!

The morning sun touched her face hotly, cruelly showing up the faint purple shadows under her eyes, the tired lines of her mouth, the awful tenseness of her attitude. Tense—because she knew if she let go at all she would break down completely.

She had not broken down. Afterward, looking back on it, it seemed a miracle that she hadn't. But something—pride, probably—had sustained her. Even through the long, dragging hours of the early morning when she had lain cramped, aching, shivering, alone in the big bedroom; when in whatever attitude she lay, she could get no rest. Dully, she had wondered if she would ever be able to relax again.

At last she could stay in bed no longer. She knew that if she didn't get up and move about that she would scream. The awfulness of knowing that the man she had married was in

the next room and that he did not love her was driving her almost crazy. To know that she must go on, that she belonged to him, that she was no longer free to do as she wished, were things that she did not dare think about yet.

She had married Stenson because, in him, she had visioned her ideal man. She would have been humble, worshipful, ready to sacrifice herself in every way for him.

"It's a good joke on me," she thought, her parched lips twisting. How Lion would laugh—or would he laugh?

Lion! All through her suffering she had tried to keep him from her thoughts. Lion, whom she had sacrificed on the altar of the ideal man. Only to discover in those hours of anguish he was her ideal. Or did it really matter whether he was the ideal or not? She only knew what her subconscious mind had known from the beginning. What it had tried to tell her, only she had been too obstinate to listen; too full of storybook ideals; of theories.

What had Lion said to her that day in the old inn? "A girl may think she does, but she doesn't really want to marry her ideal. She just wants a nice chap who's companionable and who has a sense of humor. One with the intelligence and the wish to understand her." He had said that, but in her ignorance, she hadn't believed him. She had clung to her belief in Stenson, the typical man's man, glorifying in his lack of understanding of female psychology, proud of his blunt masculine viewpoint.

And now, those very virtues she had

exalted had broken her. Broken her ideals, her happiness, her confidence that life was bound to come out all right for her. Before now she'd known, of course, that people's lives could go wrong. That marriage could end in heartbreak and tragedy. But not for a moment, in her heart of hearts, had she believed hers could. The sublime belief in one's own future in youth's greatest heritage. That belief Stenson had robbed her of last night. Now she knew, and knew fatally, that her marriage could and had gone wrong.

Dawn was a mere suggestion in an opal-tinted sky when she crept from her bed. She thrust her feet into tiny rose-colored mules, throwing a soft satin negligee about her. Both were new, and their very newness mocked her.

She quietly opened the door into the sitting room.

Stenson was on the couch sleeping soundly. A slight smile of triumph still

lingered on his face. Gin stared across the room at him, almost with a look of morbid fascination, as though she tried vainly to discover in his features some trace of the man she had loved. Had Stenson changed so in the course of one night? Or, had she changed?

She turned back into the bedroom with a gesture both of heartbreak and relief. Heartbreak in her disillusion; relief in, momentarily, escaping from him.

Crossing the room she drew back the curtains, threw open the glass doors, and stepped out onto the balcony. With her hands clasped about the railings she

#### THE STORY SO FAR:

**J**EANETTE GEERY, "Gin" for short, is in love with Stenson Clay, who is in love with Rose Laten. Gin realizes that Rose is encouraging Clay for some reason other than love, and plans to save him from Rose. Gin and Stenson are married, after Stenson discovers Rose kissing Lion Barrington, who is in love with Gin. They sail for Paris, and on the first night of their arrival Stenson tells Gin that he does not love her. Gin tells him she will never be his wife and locks herself in her room.

stood and watched the dawn break, as once before she had watched it, less than a week ago, at Deepvale. How poignantly she remembered that morning! The deepening colors in the sky's gaudy canvas had spoken of high hope, higher expectation. Stenson—love—life before her. Now, in one night those first two had been taken from her. Stenson might remain, but the dream Stenson was lost forever. Only life was left her; and life seemed curiously unimportant.

She leaned farther over the railing and wondered, in a vague, unhappy way, if it would hurt very much to fall over. If only she might be sure of instantaneous death. But to live on, maimed, broken. She shivered and stepped back.

The dawn was now a warm, living thing; the rose in the sky rivaled the rose color in her negligee. She looked like the figurehead of dawn itself, with the orange light reflected in the red-gold tints of her hair.

What a wonderful dawn this might have been! If only she could have shared it with some one. She looked down again into the deserted boulevard. And, for a moment, she had a queer illusion. She heard the faint hum of an approaching car. She saw the dim outline of a man's figure—it might have been Lion. And, for a brief space, in her imagination it was Lion. Lion standing looking up at her in the misty morning. Lion, all his love for her shining out of his dark-brown eyes. Calling to her, "Lovely, lovely, don't look so sad, please."

She answered, in a low voice: "I am sad, because I was a fool, Lion. I have been an awful fool."

"A fool, lovely?"

"Yes—for not realizing—for not knowing it was you." Then, her voice suddenly choking, "You all the time, Lion. I love you, love you."

She said that last sentence aloud.

The sound of her own voice in the empty air startled her. It dispelled the illusion. The hum of the approaching car was but the noise of a truck, the man but a laborer who was on his way to work.

But that she had said it, was the startling thing. She had admitted it into her consciousness. She half turned, momentarily, as if to flee from it. As though, in some queer way, she could leave the forlorn admission out on the balcony behind her. But she didn't flee. Perhaps, in her heart of hearts, she didn't want to. For, with the admission, she was conscious of an inner glow, a sense of warmth that, momentarily, overcame the coldness of her former disillusion.

With a gesture of welcome abandon she flung out her arms to the brightening day and whispered again, "I love you."

She seemed to hear an answering echo in the soft morning breeze. And for a time she was happy.

But her happiness did not last. Bitterness came and crushed it out. If only she'd known before! "But you did know," a voice seemed to whisper to her. "You've always known, from the first day he kissed you. But you wouldn't allow yourself to believe it. You didn't trust him. You believed what you heard against him. And now you're paying for it. You deserve to pay. One always does pay for lack of faith."

She relived, as she stood there, her whole past association with Lion. Lion—in all his various moods. Lion, gay, debonair, immaculately dressed, laughing at every one, everything. Lion, who seemed to hold nothing sacred, yet, in a queer way, held so much sacred. Only she hadn't had the sense to realize that. Then there was the Lion whose eyes would grow black with bitterness, whose sharp tongue would lash one. The Lion she had persuaded her-

self she hated, but who fascinated her, despite that. The one who had held her in his arms and kissed her the night of his aunt's ball. And yet another Lion. The man who had come to her the morning of her wedding; the boy Lion, trying to be brave, to carry his heartbreak off with a flippant air. But he hadn't succeeded. And how glad she was that he hadn't! Those few minutes, as he had told her his story, his arms about her, tender, yearning arms, were her most precious memories. He had said, "I was disillusioned with life. A few love affairs. I almost persuaded myself I liked it. Then I met you, Gin."

She clasped her hands together, hugging the memory to her, defying the whole world to take it from her.

Morning had now established itself. Hurrying pedestrians in the street below glanced up at her tense little figure poised there, admiringly, questioningly. Slowly Gin became conscious of their glances. She turned in from the balcony, leaving behind her memory, returning to reality.

Stenson! A slight sound of movement in the next room brought all her present misery rushing back to her. More fiercely, more poignantly now because of that breath-taking revelation. Stenson, whom she had married, but who had killed her love the first time they were alone together.

She stood in the bedroom, listening to his sounds of movement, her hands tightly clenched, her lips compressed. Her face hardened; the expression sat unnaturally about her small, sensitive features.

She thought, swiftly, with a queer sense of detachment, "I can't go on with it. Last night he killed every bit of love or affection I had for him. He killed even my trust. And, without that, how can any marriage go on?"

The solution when it came seemed so simple she wondered she hadn't

thought of it immediately. She would leave him. She would go back to New York and Ann and her job. Thank heavens she hadn't yet sacrificed her interest in the shop. She would work. And in work would find peace, and, a wistful look overshadowed her face, some measure of happiness even.

With this resolution came a burst of feverish energy. She dressed hurriedly for fear lest she should not be ready by the time he awakened. There must be no argument, no pleas.

She would tell him at once what she intended doing. Never did it occur to Gin to creep away before he awakened. It was in her nature to face everything, however unpleasant. So it happened when, at last, Stenson awoke she was standing in the doorway, dressed for the street.

Stenson opened his eyes wide, then shut them again several times as he stared at her. What was she up so early for?—he wondered. But, before he could ask her, he had to have some water. His tongue felt thick. His head, too, was heavy and muddled. He wished now he hadn't drunk so much champagne. He couldn't remember a great deal of the evening. At least, not clearly. But he remembered enough. They weren't memories that made him feel exactly pleased with himself, or with the world, for that matter. He felt rather abashed.

His inner sense of shame made him speak almost challengingly. As though he were defying his own consciousness.

"What's the point in getting up so early? Been taking a look around Paris?"

Gin shook her head slowly. She continued to stand there looking at him. She was trying to see him in the right perspective. But she couldn't. Her emotions were too tangled. Did she love him at all? Had any of her love survived the havoc of the night before? Even that she couldn't answer. She

only knew that his appearance shocked her. But in a queer, impersonal way; as though he had been a stranger.

While he waited for her to reply, Stenson got off the couch, crossed to the table and took a long drink of water. Then he ran a hand through his hair,

Gin crossed to the bell. "I'll ring for yours. I'm afraid I haven't time to wait and have any."

It was her tone of voice, more than her words, that surprised him. Clear, matter of fact, yet with an underlying note of hopelessness in it.



*"I'm leaving you and going back to New York," she said slowly. "Back to work."*

reached for a cigarette and sat down again.

He repeated, the note of challenge even more apparent in his voice.

"Been taking a stroll? Had your coffee yet?"

Gin moistened her lips. "No." She had not thought of food.

"Mind pressing the bell then? We'll have it brought up at once."

"Not time?" He screwed up his eyes again. The strong sunlight was blinding.

Gin half turned her head away, and seemed to focus her attention on some object on the table. "No, I have a train to catch."

That startled him. He stared at her. "What are you talking about? We're not leaving here for a week."

Gin sighed. It was queer, how aloof she felt throughout all this. As if, somehow, it had nothing to do with her. Yet it must have, mustn't it? He was her husband and she had loved him. "I don't know what you're doing," she replied quietly, "but I'm going to Cherbourg to-day and from there I'm sailing for home."

He flung his cigarette aside in sudden exasperation. Any sense of mystery always had exasperated Stenson. "Look here, you might let me in on this. It's a bit early in the day to talk in riddles, you know."

"All right." She turned again toward him, and her face hardened. Still it was hard to say it. Not so much because of Stenson the man, but because of all those stupid hopes and dreams that had been bound up in him. "I'm leaving you and going back to New York," she said slowly. "Back to work."

He stared at her, ejaculated. "But what about our honeymoon?"

"Honeymoon?" It was that tight laugh of hers which enlightened him. At least, partially. Such a bitterness of despair and disillusion underlay it. He felt his face grow hot, uncomfortably so. And his eyes fell before her light-brown ones.

"I—I—" he stammered and cleared his throat. "You're not enjoying it?"

Gin's face flushed. Her hands started to tremble. She thrust them into the pockets of her coat. "Did you think I enjoyed your drunken talk last night?"

His sense of guilt increased. Still he tried to brazen it out, but with little hope of success.

"What did you expect?" he blustered. "A man might at least have a little fun when he comes to Paris."

Fun! It caught at her throat. She felt weak, as though she were going to start laughing again. What hadn't she expected?

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But aloud she said, "Don't let's argue about it, Stenson. I'm going."

The finality in her voice convinced him of her sincerity. He rose to his feet. "You mean—you're leaving me?"

She nodded and wet her lips again. "Yes, it's all over. And I don't intend to take anything from you. Not ever. I earned my own living until yesterday. I don't suppose I've altogether lost the knack." Her lips twisted with a ghost of humor.

"I don't understand," Stenson muttered. He crossed over to the mantel-shelf and drummed his fingers on the ledge. He didn't understand. He felt completely at a loss. Could this be the same girl talking who, he had persuaded himself, had tried to force him to marry her because she wanted a soft job for life—to be kept in luxury—to be spared the necessity of the daily grind in the shop—that very shop which now she was so calmly proposing to return to—telling him she didn't want a cent from him?

Then there was the check. How else had it come into her possession if she hadn't stolen it? Last night he had believed that sincerely. Perhaps he had wanted to. But this morning, looking across into her wide brown eyes he began to doubt. And, in doubting, his own sense of guiltiness returned, tenfold.

As the pause lengthened, she turned on him fiercely. "Did you think I would stay after what you told me?"

He muttered unhappily, "I didn't know what I was doing. I was mad—after I found that check."

Gin's fierce anger evaporated, as suddenly as it had flared up. Instead she looked puzzled. "What check?"

Stenson felt his face grow hot again. It was one thing to think some one a thief and quite another to accuse one of it. But it wasn't only that. The longer he looked into her pale, proud face, the less certain he became. And,

in an odd way that wasn't at all logical, he began to remember his first impressions of her.

She became the elfin girl of Mrs. Hoppingjay's ball, rather than the girl he had married to get revenged on Rose. He thought of the sweetness of her that first night, her ready sympathy, her quick understanding, her kindness.

Gin's voice broke in upon his thoughts. She repeated the question. "What check?"

"The one I found in your bag last evening," he stammered. "The one signed by Rose's stepfather."

"Well?"

Stenson groaned inwardly. Had she looked in the least guilty he would have felt better. But her only reaction seemed wondering curiosity.

He blundered on. "Rose told me you took it out of her bag the night of Mrs. Hoppingjay's ball. When Mr. Barrington gave you both back the wrong bags by mistake."

Gin stared at him. It was some time before she found her voice. "Rose told you that?"

He nodded miserably.

"If you thought that, why did you marry me?" Gin asked presently.

Stenson rested his elbows on the mantelshelf, and let his head fall into his hands. "I don't think I really did believe it, not until I actually saw the check," he mumbled.

"But why didn't you ask me to explain then?"

He didn't reply. He didn't know how to.

The entrance of the waiter with their coffee momentarily relieved the tension. Already it was whispered around the hotel that a bridal couple were occupying suite No. 22. The waiter's good-morning smile had much the same knowing quality that the concierge's had had the night before. Still, the good man was a little disconcerted to find that, instead of sitting up in bed a de-

lectable mass of lace and ribbons, the bride was already dressed for the street. And the groom's expression was far from that of a loving husband.

All the same he went through with his part.

"Bonjour, monsieur, madame." He bowed affably, set the tray on the glass-topped table, took a silver jug in each hand and poured out the steaming milk and coffee simultaneously. Then he presented a cup to each of them with a flourish, bowed, and withdrew.

"Listen," Gin said, after the door had shut behind him. Her small, flushed face was grimly determined. "I'll tell you about that check. Perhaps I should have done so before. But when, the night in the car, you told me you knew all about Rose I didn't think there was any need to go into details. I could see you were upset. I didn't want to make things any worse. But that check was given me by Mr. Laten as a bribe—a bribe to keep my mouth shut. You see, they'd got me into a corner. I knew if I didn't take it they'd ruin you before I had a chance to do anything about it. You had such implicit trust in Rose." She hadn't been able to keep a slight note of scorn out of her voice. Stenson, hearing it, crimsoned.

"Ruin me? How could they ruin me?" he stammered. He was gazing at her incredulously. So far her story sounded fantastic to a degree.

Gin caught her breath. For a moment her head swam dizzily. Had she made a ghastly mistake? Or didn't he really know about them, despite what he had said to her that night?

"Why, you told me the night of the ball that if your whereabouts in Burma became known through you you'd be disgraced. Your company would be ruined. You told me that yourself."

"What has that to do with it?" Stenson demanded. His voice was rough because of his bewilderment.

"Don't you see?" Gin was suddenly angry at his obstinacy, at his lack of perception. "That man was all out to get the information from you. I'm sure he has something to do with a rival company. That's why he set Rose onto you."

"Good heavens! You mean to tell me Rose was pumping me—deliberately?" Stenson ejaculated.

"Of course." Gin's fierce young voice was scornful. "Any one could

see that." And standing there, her back against the table, she told him everything. From her first interview with the Latens to her last one, when they had forced the bribe upon her. Once Stenson interrupted, "Great heavens, it's incredible. You don't mean to say—" But she silenced him, marshaling her facts so clearly he couldn't but believe her.

There was a long silence after she finished. It had a leaden quality. It hung heavily about the room as though neither had the wish nor the energy to lift it.

Stenson's head was sunk in his hands. Gin saw he was suffering acutely. And in his suffering something of the boy had come back into his face. Once his shoulders twitched convulsively. This final disillusionment about Rose had surely hit him



*He fell on his knees before her. "If you leave me now I may go right under, Gin. I need you. I need you, dear. And you said you loved me."*

hard. He prayed, with a sort of numb desperation, that he might hate her. He reminded himself over and over again of her hypocrisy, her cheapness, but still he couldn't hate her.

"Since you know so much you may as well know the rest," he said. "I was out in Burma prospecting for rubies for a mining corporation. I found a rich deposit near the surface in the Shann Hills between Burma and the Chinese frontier. Fifteen miles to the north of the monastery of the Golden Buddha. This deposit must have been worked in ancient times, but for many years it seems to have been forgotten. My company is trying to get a concession to buy the land from the local government. But, of course, if they suspected the deposit the government wouldn't sell—at least not for the price now under consideration. You don't think"—and here his voice broke suddenly, his whole face was bathed in perspiration—"you don't think," he repeated, "that Laten knows enough already to—" He didn't finish the sentence. But Gin understood. She tried to reassure him.

"No, I'm sure he doesn't. He knows something, of course. But he's very vague about the exact location. I don't think you need worry."

"I hope to Heaven you're right!"

But still he continued to stand there. She saw him pass his hand feverishly over his face. The sight of his misery stirred her. It awoke her maternal instinct. Despite all he had done to her he was still very much the great, lumbering boy. She moved over to him and laid a hand on his arm.

"Don't, Stenson, please." She knew he was crying, and it seemed awful to see a strong man like Stenson cry.

He grabbed her hand and kissed it feverishly. It was quite wet when he let it go. "Gin, you won't leave me now," he mumbled. "You won't leave me to go on alone. Why, you've done

everything for me. I've behaved like an utter pig. I ought to be kicked, to be horsewhipped. I—oh, why didn't you tell me all this before, Gin?" Then, without waiting for her reply, he went on, the words rushing out of him in a torrent of self-reproach. "I know. I was so mad about Rose I mightn't have listened. I hadn't the sense to realize you—how fine you were, Gin. You are fine—wonderful. Don't—don't leave me now."

His abjection was almost unbearable to her. She felt she could have withstood anything but that. He fell on his knees before her, clutched her coat, buried his face in it. "If you leave me now I may go right under, Gin. I need you. I need you, dear. And you said you loved me."

Yes, she had. The awful part was to think that she had loved him. And it was gone. She felt no longer bitter or revengeful toward him for her own suffering the night before. She was sorry for him. In a vague way she was even fond of him. But love—no.

"I know," she whispered. She stared over his bowed head, out into the street, but didn't see anything. People moved about, but they seemed like indistinct figures in a dream.

"Gin"—he had clutched her about the knees, trying to draw her down to him—"you'll stick by me? I'll do anything you say, dear. You make the conditions, any conditions. Only don't leave me."

The despair in his voice broke through her resistance. She had loved him. She had married him. She knew she couldn't desert him in his bitter humiliation. She touched his hair with her hand, the crisp light brown waves. How it had thrilled her once to do that. But now she knew no thrill, only pity for him, for herself. She closed her eyes tightly so that the tears wouldn't come. Heavens what a mess!

"I'll stay—if I can, Stenson." Her

voice was tired. He stumbled to his feet. He would have grabbed her in his arms, but she pressed a white, shaking hand against his chest and held him away. "But"—her voice was hesitant—"we're to be friends. Only friends. You understand, Stenson?"

She swayed as she said it. The strain of it all, on top of that awful sleepless night, was almost too much. She felt faint. Gently he helped her over to the couch. He knelt beside her as she sat down, his cheek pressed against one of her limp hands. He whispered, "I do understand, dear. It'll be as you say for the present. But don't—don't take away all hope from me, please, dear. After all"—his voice cracked, then softened—"you're my wife."

Gin didn't answer him. She lay still, her eyes closed, struggling against that terrifying sense of faintness.

Yes, she was his wife. And now that the awful misunderstanding had been cleared up, shouldn't it be all right? Wasn't there a happy ending in store for them in a not-far-distant future? By all the rules of the game there should be. It was only that she knew, with a sort of deadening certainty, that she didn't love Stenson. She had never loved him really. It had only been illusion. All her love was, had always been given to Lion.

Stenson was sitting on the couch beside her, stroking back her hair. He muttered: "You'll see. Everything will come all right, dear."

She sighed, "I hope so."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

In the days that followed Gin often wondered if a man's kindness isn't the hardest thing to bear. The kindness of a man who tries to show one that, while he understands one's reluctance, he remains patient and hopeful.

Stenson went out of his way to do nice things for Gin. Such as having a

corsage of flowers beside her plate at dinner every night. Usually unsuitable ones, whose colors literally shrieked with her dress. Not that she ever let him know it. She would wear them bravely, flaunting them under the critical eyes of the other women diners. He would buy her presents; expensive perfumes; jewelry. She protested often. Each new gift seemed to make the chain around her neck heavier. To bring home to her anew the deadening truth that she didn't, couldn't love him.

They did not remain in Paris. Both knew instinctively there was no hope for peace, let alone happiness there. Paris, haunted as it was by the memory of that first ghastly night. They went to Dinard, finding diversion on the beach by daytime, the casino by night.

Gin loved bathing. Stenson was a magnificent swimmer. Looking at him, tall and bronzed in his bathing suit, lying on the yellow sands, or dashing into the foaming waves, Gin would wonder why she couldn't love him. He was a wonderful specimen of manhood. Besides, in many respects he had become again the old Stenson. The man she had admired, had persuaded herself she loved. The attractive Stenson he had been before his disillusion over Rose.

Gin would shade her eyes and watch the hot sun glistening on his powerful brown shoulders. And she would think, "If I make myself forget about Paris, mightn't I love him again?"

And she would try. She would force herself to think of his good qualities, half realizing, even as she did so, that good qualities never made one love any one yet. But she persisted, and every evening, as he kissed her good night, in the little sitting room that divided their two rooms, she would try and return his kiss with more warmth than usual. She would say to herself, "You see, I enjoy his kisses. They don't revolt me." But when Stenson, thus

encouraged, would put his arms about her and hold her to him, she would feel an icy coldness creeping through her. And she would gasp a little, push him away from her. "Please, Stenson, please."

For a time he humored her. He would kiss her lightly on the forehead and say, "It's all right, dear. Don't get upset. I only wanted to kiss that absurd lock of hair that falls over your ear." She would laugh, hysterical relief in her laughter. "Good night. Sleep well, Stenson."

Alone in her own room she would fling herself down on the bed and bury

her hot face in the cool linen pillow. She would think, "I got by that time. Am I a miserable little coward? But when he touches me it makes me almost sick."

But Stenson was not always so patient. For one thing, during the long summer days on the beach together, he had fallen in love with Gin. The littleness, the sweetness, the wistfulness of her, along with her childish gayety, her quick flashes of humor, tugged at his heart. He did not love her with the same intensity of passion as he had loved Rose. It wasn't the soul-shattering emotion that that had been. But he did love



*Looking at him, tall and bronzed in his bathing suit, lying on the yellow sands, Gin would wonder why she couldn't love him.*

her, in a quieter, saner way that daily grew stronger.

One evening he didn't take her evasion as lightly as usual. He would not be pushed away easily. Instead he held her arms more firmly, stared down into her wide brown eyes, that were scared suddenly.

"You know, Gin"—his voice was unsteady—"I'm only human after all. I can't be put off forever. I have tried to be patient, dear."

"I know." Tears stung her eyes, she closed them quickly. If only she could love him again, just a little.

There was a long pause, then her voice came in a whisper. "Please, understand, Stenson. You promised we should be friends."

His arms slackened. He crossed over to the window and stood staring out. The lights of the casino twinkled brightly from across the road. Men and women came out, arm in arm, laughing and gay. With a fierce gesture he ran his hand through his hair. "This is a fine honeymoon, isn't it?" he asked with a harsh laugh.

Gin's face colored coral pink, right to the lobes of her burning ears. But she answered quickly, "Then let's end it, Stenson. Let's go back home."

Her eagerness was so apparent that he grumbled, "Do I bore you so much?"

The hurt in his voice touched her. She tried to laugh him out of his gloominess. "It isn't that, Stenson. But here, with nothing to do it's"—she paused, as though uncertain how to word it—"rather a strain on us both, isn't it? Maybe back in New York, dear sane old New York, we'll see things differently. Perhaps a little work is the tonic we need."

He shrugged. "You may be right. Only"—and his eyes as they rested upon her in her soft evening gown, glowed—"I shall always want you, Gin."

She did not reply. There was nothing to say. But her heart was lighter

than it had been for days. New York again!

She felt that she had been away for months, years. New York meant Ann, the shop and Wuffer. Her thoughts stopped there. But she knew, in her heart, New York meant only—Lion.

Would she see him? Better not, her mind decided. But everything else in her cried out a vigorous protest against this harsh decision. How could she live if she didn't see Lion? And would it hurt very much if she saw him just once?

Coming up the Narrows Stenson broached the subject of where they should live.

Gin said quickly, keeping her gaze firmly fixed on a white gull that crept across the blue horizon like a large white moth, "I thought I'd go back to my apartment—for a short while at least. I—I wrote Ann and asked her to leave everything as it was when I left it, and to have it cleaned for me."

Stenson looked stunned. "Go back to your own apartment? But what about me?"

The bird had disappeared out of sight. But still Gin kept her eyes fixed on the horizon.

"You could take a furnished apartment or go to a hotel, couldn't you?"

There was a pause. Fellow passengers, talking in loud voices, passed by. A steward came up to inquire if they would like lunch. Stenson said, "Yes." Yet neither of them attempted to go below.

"Gin, you don't mean this as a permanent arrangement?" There was a break in his voice he tried to hide by an assumption of gruffness.

"I don't know." She spoke with a deadly quietness. "That's one thing I want to find out. And I don't think it possible to think anything out clearly when we're seeing each other constantly, you know."

He didn't answer that. Instead, he said: "But what will people think?"

She sighed. "Does that matter?"

But she saw at once, by his expression, that it did matter to Stenson. He was of that breed of men who are, at heart, intensely conventional. Far more conventional than any woman ever dreamed of being.

She smiled slightly, and amended: "I'll entertain your friends at your apartment for you, if you like. And it will only be for a time."

He covered her hand with his as it lay on the ship's railing. "You mean that, Gin?"

The eagerness in his voice both touched and disturbed her. If only she could be sure she would recapture some of her early love for him!

"You know I'll be going back to Burma in less than a month," he went on. "You'll come with me, won't you? After all, you're my wife. And, well, dear, it's up to you to stick by me."

Gin knew that. She was his wife and her place was by his side. Nothing could change that, ever.

"I'll try to come, Stenson." Her voice was hoarse. "You know I'll try."

"That's all I ask of you, Gin." He drew her arm through his. "Come, let's have lunch." They walked the length of the deck in silence. But, before turning down the companionway, he muttered, "You know, dear, if you do come with me, there won't be any more of this friendship arrangement."

The next morning the social column in one of the morning papers carried an announcement that Mr. and Mrs. Stenson Clay had returned from their honeymoon abroad.

In two separate apartments the announcement was read with interest. But perhaps "interest" is too mild a term.

One was a bachelor apartment downtown. A bachelor apartment, but elegantly and tastefully furnished. Lion

did not believe in discomfort. Deep armchairs covered in brown linen; thick Persian rugs on the waxed floor. Bright window curtains; gleaming brass smoke stands; the walls lined with oak bookcases.

Lion, in his silk dressing gown, was seated before a belated breakfast which his man was serving. The morning paper was spread out before him. The paragraph caught his attention—Mr. and Mrs. Stenson Clay. His eyes sparkled suddenly. He didn't hear Williams, his man, inquiring if he would take another cup of coffee. He thought: "Gin's back. Then it really will be New York. Even if I don't see her, New York will be alive again."

Presently the intense brightness faded from his eyes. He would make no effort to see her. All the same he spent the greater part of the day wandering about the section of town near where her bag shop was located.

The other apartment was in West Fifty-fourth Street. Rose's stepfather saw the announcement. But then no one else in that apartment bothered to read the morning paper.

He said sharply, "Stenson Clay and that girl are back from their honeymoon." There was a noticeable sneer in his voice as he pronounced the last word.

Neither Rose nor her mother commented. One wouldn't have thought they had even heard him, but for a certain worried look on Mrs. Laten's face. She looked like a hen ruffling its feathers in preparation to protect its chicken from danger. Insults heaped upon Rose by her stepfather usually did follow any reference to Stenson Clay.

Rose was curled upon the couch looking through a movie magazine. Lately it had occurred to her she might go on the stage or in the talkies. Life was rather dull without either Lion or Stenson to take her out. Besides, she would be glad to get away from her

stepfather. He had been barely livable with since her failure with Stenson Clay.

Mr. Laten thrust the paper savagely aside and glared at Rose.

"Did you hear me say that that Clay is back from abroad?"

"I heard you the first time," Rose interrupted guardedly.

"Well?" he rapped the word out at her.

She raised her amber-colored eyes. "Well?" she repeated calmly.

He came and stood over her, in that threatening, glowering attitude that had so disconcerted Gin.

"Might I ask if you intend to do anything about it? It needn't be too late, even yet."

Rose turned another page of her magazine. She suppressed a slight yawn.

"Answer me," he thundered, drawing his bushy gray brows together fiercely, his face a deep red.

There was a tense silence. Rose did not take her eyes off the page. But she answered quietly, "I always did intend to do something about it. Still, you must give them time to get over love's first rapture, you know."

## CHAPTER XV.

The first morning she was home, awaking in the familiar surroundings of her apartment, it seemed to Gin incredible she had ever been away. Everything was so familiar. So blessedly familiar. She thought, as she stretched her arms high above her head, "If only I need never leave her again!"

She sighed, because the thought was so beautiful and impossible. Life was waiting to be faced just around the corner, so to speak. Life with all its complexities, tragedies, heartbreak. This was only a lull. A breathing space before she took another plunge into the unknown.

But how good it was to be back! Good to feel Wuffer's eager black eyes upon her as he waited for the slightest invitation to pounce all over her. Good to know, as she sprung out of bed and set the percolator on to boil, that she could have breakfast just as she liked it. Bacon curled up in a nice crisp way, orange marmalade, and coffee. An honest-to-goodness New York breakfast. It was good, too, to know as she dressed that she was going down to the shop to work. Work, what a relief it was. She would regain her sanity at work.

She must do that. There were so many important decisions to be faced within the next few weeks. Decisions that would affect her whole future. Would she go to Burma with Stenson or wouldn't she? Would she follow him out later? Or would she just stay behind and pick up the threads of her life where they had been broken off the day of her marriage? Could she do that? Can one ever go back and find things just as one left them?

There was one thread she knew she could never pick up again. That was her friendship with Lion. She didn't dare resume that. She knew she couldn't trust herself. She thought, "I might be weak." And the awful part was that she knew she longed to be weak. "I mustn't see him. I mustn't. I mustn't," she kept repeating it all through that day, and the next day. And the next. Like a refrain it kept hammering itself into her brain. One she couldn't altogether believe in. Because to be in New York and not see Lion was impossible somehow.

All the same it was ten days before she did see him. And in the meantime there was the work at the shop. But, somehow, as the days passed, her enthusiasm waned. She found, to her chagrin, she did not have the interest in it she had had formerly. She grew restless, unable to concentrate upon the



*There was a long pause, then her voice came in a whisper. "Please, understand, Stenson. You promised we should be friends."*

selling of bags to rich, pampered society women who were so fussy and choosey, and altogether impossible!

Constantly her eyes would stray to the big window that looked out into the street. Ann would say, "Who on earth are you watching for, Gin? That tall, handsome husband of yours?" And Gin

would flush and mumble, "Maybe." And for a time she would deliberately keep her glance away from the street. But, presently, her eye would wander back, scanning the passers-by, eagerly, hopefully. At times, her heart would jump into her throat; her color would flush wildly. For a moment she would

hardly be able to bear the tension. But it never was Lion. Just some one who vaguely resembled him from a distance, who walked like he did.

Gin allowed none of her friends, not even Ann, to sense the true state of affairs between herself and Stenson. She knew how it would gall his pride if any one suspected. She pretended it was merely for convenience of getting early to work without disturbing him that she kept her old apartment. She allowed people to think that she divided her time between it and Stenson's apartment, oddly enough in the very same house as Lion had his apartment.

But it was hard to play the rôle of a happy young bride. Always to be on the stage, so to speak. Never to be able to be herself. It began to wear on her nerves and she became jumpy and irritable. She thought, desperately, "This can't go on. I've got to decide something soon."

Often she had lunch with Stenson in his apartment. He seemed to prefer that to lunching with her in a restaurant. Once he remarked with some slight bitterness, "Seeing you here in my apartment I can actually believe you are my wife, Gin. At times"—his lips twisted—"it's hard to believe we are married, you know."

Gin turned her face away. It hurt to have to go on refusing him. But the love he had killed was still a dead weight in her heart. Yet, away from him, she would almost convince herself she could go to him even without love. After all, she was his wife. There was such a thing as duty. But, when she was with him, she knew an awful shrinking. A feeling as though she were slowly being turned to ice whenever he attempted to caress her. Then she would push him away from her, hating herself as she did so because of the pain in his eyes, plead for more time. Time—time! As though time could solve her problem!

Facing her across the little luncheon table, he said, "You know, Gin, my people are kicking up a great fuss, wondering why we haven't been to visit them. It—it does seem rather queer. You must admit that."

She nodded, pushed some salmon about the plate with her fork, and said slowly, "I suppose it does. What do you think we should do?"

"They want us to come down next week-end."

She pushed her plate back and replied, "All right, I'll go, if you like."

"That's great, dear. And"—his voice was hesitant—"I'd rather they didn't know there was anything, well, unusual in our relationship. It would upset mother."

Gin moistened her lips. "Yes, I can understand that."

Stenson's face reddened and he blundered on. "I'll—I'll sleep in the dressing room. I promise I won't disturb you, dear."

She nodded, but did not answer. Yet, something within her cried out in distress. If only he would not be so thoughtful. If only he had remained the Stenson of that ghastly time in Paris, the one who had killed her love instead of this other gentler Stenson. How much easier then to put him out of her life!

"I must run. I'll be late. Ann will be waiting to go out for lunch." She gathered her gloves and bag together and started to leave. He caught one of her hands. "Let me walk with you, dear."

She forced a laugh. "I won't be walking. I shall run—all the way. Dodge through the traffic. I'm so small I can get away with it. But you, with your bigness, you'd be bound to be caught in it." She laughed again, pretending to make a joke of it. But she knew, it wasn't altogether a joke. She wanted to get away from him, to be by herself.

He did not press the point. Still he held onto her hand and stared down at her in a queer way.

"Gin," his voice was serious. "You know I'll be leaving town very soon now. I must know whether or not you're coming with me. I've got to arrange about cabins and all that sort of thing. And while"—his voice sank—"I don't want to urge you to do anything distasteful to you"—he flushed—"I—I want you to come. I need you, dear."

She knew, in fairness to him, that she should make up her mind at once. She said breathlessly, "I'll let you know, after the week-end. I promise you, Stenson."

He kissed her hand. "I know you won't disappoint me, Jeanette." His voice was unsteady.

Gin broke away from him, let herself out of the door and ran down the stairs. She did not wait for the elevator. On her way out she passed the door of Lion's apartment. Often she had passed it before, and always, she would pause momentarily, her breath quickening, a queer mist stealing before her eyes. Then she would run on quickly, as though in fear that the door would open and he would confront her.

She passed the door in safety, to-day. But, as she reached the bottom step, the outer glass doors leading in from the street swung open and Lion stepped through them.

Hundreds of times Gin had imagined such a meeting. She had planned what she would say to him, what he would say to her. In her mind she knew exactly how to handle the situation, even to the tiniest details.

But now, actually seeing Lion before her, she gasped and stood still. Everything she had thought of saying, everything casual, went right out of her head. She stood on the last step, clutching onto the railing, swaying a

little, and saying in a strangled ghost of a voice, "Lion—O Lion."

Lion, too, had paused instantaneously. His face twitched once. And she could see even in the dimly lighted hallway that his eyes, as he stared up at her, gleamed pure black.

The next moment he had rushed up to her, grasped both her hands.

"Lovely! Lovely!"

The tension was terrible. Terrible—and rather wonderful, at the same time. Gin, as she looked down at him, had a queer illusion as though she were dissolving in space. As though something in her being was rushing out to meet something in his. That nothing she could do, not all the will power in the world, could stop it.

"What are you doing here, lovely? Were you coming to see me?"

She shook her head. A smile made her brown eyes sparkle. How good it was to hear him call her "lovely" again!

"Stenson has an apartment here," she explained.

"Stenson? You mean you both have?"

Gin hesitated. It was so easy to play a part before others, even to lie to them, but not to Lion. She did not feel capable of lying to him. Not when he was gripping her hands so hard, looking down into her face, his lips twisted in the old half-tender, half-cynical smile.

"I'm—I'm back in my old apartment until"—she gulped quickly—"we sail for Burma."

Why didn't she go on and tell him that this arrangement was purely for business, so that she could get to the shop in time? The pitiable excuse she had given every one else? But she couldn't. She just let the statement lie there, a poor cold thing, while she prayed he wouldn't comment upon it.

"I see." His voice had grown suddenly harsh. "A very modern arrangement. Rather early in the day, I should

have said. You can't have been back two weeks from the honeymoon. Still, I suppose it's just as well to begin as you're going to carry on. I congratulate you. I didn't know you were such a modern young woman, Gin."

The cynicism in his tones stung her. She turned her face away, biting her lips. "Don't, Lion."

But, in an odd way, he suddenly wanted to hurt her.

"What else am I to understand? When a young wife acknowledges she no longer lives with her husband—a husband who she assured me, less than a month ago was her ideal, everything a mere man like myself might hope but could never succeed in being—"

She snatched her hands away from him. "Shut up, Lion." Her own voice was harsh as she interrupted him. "How dare you talk like that? I wish I'd never met you. I—I—"

The wild misery in her flushed face sobered him. How he was hating himself for those mocking taunts far more than she could ever hate him. Why must he deliberately be cruel to her—the one being he worshiped in the whole miserable world?

He moved closer to her. "Forgive me, Gin. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have said anything." They were both silent. She thrust her shaking hands into the pockets of her amber-colored suit. Amber like the beads around her throat; amber like the golden-brown tints in her hair that escaped from the sides of her close-fitting hat. She wished she could say something ordinary yet convincing and leave him. But she couldn't. It was as though her limbs were rooted there and she was unable to move.

"What's happened, lovely?" His young voice was fierce suddenly, demanding.

Gin's face whitened and she set her teeth. "Nothing's happened, except, as you know, we were married and went

away on a honeymoon. Paris, Dinard—really a marvelous place. The bathing was divine." She spoke quickly, in a rush.

His face grew sterner. "Don't lie to me, lovely."

She stamped her foot in sudden anger. "Why should I lie to you?"

"Heaven knows, but you are lying. Oh, my dear, don't you think I know?"

Gin did not answer. Her voice felt all choked up in her throat. She did not feel as though she could ever speak again. She just stood there, struggling against an awful desire to throw herself into Lion's arms and cry. To tell him everything, as she might have told a mother or a father—some one at home. She felt suddenly, and in a queer way she did not even try to understand it, that Lion was the only real family she had ever known, would ever know.

But there was pride. Not only her own pride. For that seemed immaterial just now. But Stenson's pride. She owed him something since she had married him.

Lion had gripped her shoulders. His long, delicately shaped fingers pressed into her flesh. "You're unhappy, lovely. Oh, that you should be unhappy!"

Her throat moved convulsively. "You've no right to say such things," she stammered.

"I have every right. I love you, dear."

"But I married Stenson."

He smiled slightly. A sad smile. "I should go on loving you if you married every man in the world, lovely. Answer me. Why are you unhappy?"

But with a great effort Gin wrenched herself free of him. If she stood there another minute she might break down completely. Then Lion would know—everything. The truth about that ghastly honeymoon, made all the more ghastly because of the realization that she loved him.

"I won't answer. I'm not unhappy. And I—I hate you, Lion! I shall always hate you!"

With that she dodged past him and literally ran through the glass doors. She bumped into people in the street, women with parcels, men with newspapers, as though she were blind. And she was, because of the great tears swimming in her eyes. She did not stop to apologize, but ran on, like some wild creature rushing for cover. They stood and stared after her, wondering who she was and what was the matter. Such a pretty girl in an amber sports suit—too pretty to have such an agonized, twisted face with tears streaming out of her eyes. She should have been smiling and carefree.

In the train, the following Friday, Stenson leaned across the luncheon table and said to Gin:

"Rose called me up this morning."

His voice was casual, seemingly so. Yet Gin sensed immediately he had been waiting a long time to make the announcement.

"Did she?" asked Gin.

He nodded. "She wanted to see me. Said she had something important to tell me."



*She gasped and stood swaying a little and saying in a strangled ghost of a voice, "Lion—O Lion."*

Gin accepted the cigarette he offered her. "What did you say?"

He shrugged. "Made excuses, of course. Said I was taking you home for the week-end, and I'd be very busy when we returned to town."

Gin thought that over, while she smoked the cigarette. Presently leaning back in her chair, she asked slowly, "Did you want to see her, Stenson?"

The slow flush that mounted to his forehead gave him away. Gin thought, wearily: "So his infatuation for her isn't over yet. He'd be eating out of



her hand again, given the opportunity. And, I suppose, since I started this job I might as well finish it."

"What do you think she had to tell you?"

He shook his head as he crumbled a roll. "Haven't the slightest idea. She said she couldn't tell me unless she saw me. I had a hard time getting away from the telephone."

Gin did not comment, but poured herself a cup of tea. She felt rather tired and all in. Was the Rose Laten business about to start all over again?—she wondered. Had she to don her coat of mail and rescue Stenson from the girl a second time? But this time she wouldn't have the same heart to put into the business. She wouldn't have love on her side to help her win the fight. Still, she scolded herself, wasn't she letting her imagination get the better of

her? Stenson could not be so foolish as to trust Rose, now that he knew all about her.

"I was wondering," he said slowly, and he avoided her eyes, "if maybe, we haven't misjudged her a little. Of course, quite a lot you told me about her is probably true. All the same, don't you think she may have been in the power of her stepfather and not have been able to help what she did?"

Gin's lips twisted wryly. "Beauty in the power of the villain, eh?"

"That's it exactly," Stenson said eagerly.

Gin looked at him, and through him. She thought: "Oh, Stenson how can you be such a fool!" But she did not say it aloud. Neither did she comment on his statement. She knew that to disparage Rose further would only increase the romantic illusion he had begun again to weave around her. Already in his imagination he had thrown a soft, flattering veil over the worst of her trickery. She no longer was the crafty, designing adventuress. Merely an unfortunate girl entrapped by an evil, designing brute of a stepfather into doing his bidding.

Gin thought, a little desperately: "I suppose there's only one way to save him." But it was hard to bring herself to face this decision. Hard to thrust all hope of love out of her life, for she knew now she would never love Stenson again.

The Clay home was a pleasantly rambling stone house, ivy-covered. Wide lawns, attractive flower beds, a tennis court, a short drive, made it all that a gentleman's country residence of the smaller variety should be. Situated not far from Southampton, the climate was pleasant throughout the greater part of the year.

Stenson's father met them in the car at the station. Colonel John Clay had spent the greater part of his life in the Philippines. He was a tall, well-made

man with iron-gray hair and gray mustache. He carried an air of authority with him. One felt that military discipline would reign as much in his home as in his regiment.

Gin supposed he was very admirable, but, from the first, she could not altogether like him. There was a certain suggestion of cruelty about his thin lips, which were partially hidden by his mustache. Something about those lips reminded her poignantly of Stenson's expression that awful time in Paris.

Colonel Clay welcomed her cordially. If he had been disappointed that Stenson had not selected a wife from a socially prominent family, he tried not to let Gin sense his disappointment.

Mrs. Clay was waiting for them in the long drawing room that looked out onto a cool, shaded lawn. Everything in that drawing room, from the heavy, green hanging curtains to the tapestries on the sofa, were slightly faded. Mrs. Clay was slightly faded, too. She wore an air of patient resignation. As though life had defeated her. From the day of her marriage her innate weakness had made her give in unquestioningly to the colonel, but it had never been a happy submission.

But long before Gin was aware of Mrs. Clay, somehow one never was aware of her easily, she found herself staring at the collection of knicknacks. It was incredible, really, that any one could have so many knicknacks. The mantelshelf, the top of the piano, a Japanese cabinet, every table was crowded with them. Miniature ivory rickshas; Indian brassware paper weights and vases; black ebony elephants, some minus an eye and others minus a tusk; a silver Japanese pagoda; an emu egg; silver mugs and rattles that had been presented to Stenson at his christening; silk and gilt photo frames. Gin had difficulty in suppressing a gasp of pure amazement at seeing such an odd assortment of things.

Perhaps she concentrated upon them unduly to take her mind off the actual moment of being introduced to Mrs. Clay. Meeting one's mother-in-law for the first time is a terrifying experience for any girl. Her head whirls with the questions, "Will she like me? Will she try to like me? Will she resent me for taking her son from her? Will I like her?"

But Gin saw, in that first moment of shaking hands with her, there was nothing alarming about Stenson's mother. Almost her first impression was, as it happened, to be her last. An intense sense of pity for her.

Mrs. Clay took Gin's hands in hers, patted them gently and said.

"So this is our boy's little wife? I'm sure she's going to feel at home here."

Her ready kindness touched Gin. She was aware of an uncomfortable, gritty sensation behind her eyes. Somehow, she felt like an impostor. As though she had no real right to kindness from Stenson's mother. It made her feel ill at ease.

This sense increased when, before dinner, Mrs. Clay took her all over the house. Stenson was in the library talking with his father. The older woman drew Gin's arm through hers, leading her into room after room. Pleasantly old-fashioned rooms, overcrowded with furniture, genteel and, like the drawing-room, faded.

On the threshold of one room she paused, momentarily.

"This used to be Stenson's nursery," she murmured. Her light-blue eyes were very round and soft. Gin felt the pressure on her arm tighten. "I"—the older woman gave a nervous little cough—"thought you might like to look around in here. I found some of Stenson's baby clothes to-day and laid them out on the bed. Just over there. See them?"

Gin advanced into the room beside her. She watched his mother finger

each piece lovingly and hold it out for her inspection. Stupidly, she found her eyes filling with tears. Mrs. Clay put down the tiny woolly vest she was holding and put an arm about Gin.

"I see you love my boy," she said softly.

Gin murmured a platitude, but her tears had been because she did not love him.

"I've always set aside this room in the hope that some day my boy would have little ones of his own to play here," she said gently, before going below again. "Now," she blinked brightly, "my dream seems as though it might be realized, doesn't it?"

Gin felt terrible. Her sense of being an impostor increased. Yet was anything that had happened her fault? Her common sense told her it wasn't. She had married Stenson, loving him sincerely. Or, at least, believing she loved him. Would she ever have awokened to the fact that she didn't, except for his incredible behavior to her that night? Still, as she sat facing him across the old carved oak dinner table, his father at one end, his mother at the other, she felt more tenderly toward him than she had for weeks. Too, the sense of actually being married to him seemed more real in his home surroundings. She was his wife. Being a wife carried responsibilities. Had she been shirking these responsibilities? Pondering too much on her sensibilities? Stenson had hurt her cruelly, but under a misapprehension. Wasn't it rather mean of her to go on holding that against him? Besides, there was the problem of Rose. As things stood at the moment he was too easy a prey, too likely to fall into Rose's scheming hands again.

If Stenson had secretly hoped that this visit to his home would soften Gin's heart toward him he did not presume on the assumption. It was Gin herself who brought up the subject that night after

dinner. Some neighbors had dropped in, and, presently, because it was hot in the drawing room, Stenson had suggested he and Gin stroll in the garden. Mrs. Clay's eyes softened, as she nodded assent. Her mind wandered back to her own brief courtship. But how soon, how deploringly soon, the colonel had ceased to be the sweetheart and had become merely the husband!

Colonel Clay frowned slightly at the suggestion. He considered any display of affection between married people bad taste and unnecessary. One wasn't sentimental after one married.

Still Stenson took Gin out into the garden. They wandered down the chipped stone pathway, pearly-white in the moonlight. The dark, silver-shot night was heavy with the scent of summer flowers—hollyhocks, gladioli, sweet peas. At the foot of the path a small fountain sent a mist of silver into the air; it fell, like a bridal veil on some rose bushes near it.

They paused by the fountain, as though by mutual consent.

Stenson said jerkily: "I used to paddle here when I was a kid. Funny, it used to seem so big to me then. Now it seems so small. I suppose that's life. We outgrow things and, as we do so, they dwindle in importance. At prep school I lived in holy terror of my headmaster. I met him the other day and could scarcely credit it was actually he. He seemed so insignificant. I couldn't imagine him inspiring fear in any one. Odd, isn't it?"

Gin nodded automatically. She had not been following him. Her mind was wondering how she could broach the subject of his return to Burma.

In the pause he moved closer to her. Instinctively, before she had thought, she moved away.

"Don't be afraid, I'm not going to touch you." His voice was bitter.

She said quietly: "I'm not afraid. I was just going to tell you, Stenson, I'm

quite ready to sail with you for Burma next week, if you still want me to come."

"If I want you! Gin, darling." He crushed her in his big arms; she was lost against him. She lay in his embrace, her heart throbbing wildly, throbbing with an awful fear. She tried to conquer it. She must conquer it. Life wouldn't be possible if, every time he held her in his arms, she should feel like this.

But, at last, she couldn't stand it any longer. She drew away from him gasping, "Stenson, let's wait until—until we're actually on the boat, please." She tried to soften it by adding: "It'll be like a honeymoon, then."

Her lack of response wounded him, wounded the man pride in him. Had he not been patient with her? And here, even while she was telling him definitely she would come to Burma with him, she was evading again.

He grumbled. "If you do come, I don't want any more of these tomfoolery conditions."

She shook her head. "I understand and I—I promise, Stenson."

He took her in his arms again, savagely. "I don't know why I put up with all this nonsense. Any one would think me—well, hideous, deformed."

She gave a choked cry. "It isn't that, Stenson." Yet, in a queer way, it was. He had been hideous to her overwrought imagination that night in Paris, when, drunk, he had told her he did not love her.

He raised her chin with his large, blunt-tipped fingers.

"You won't fail me, Gin? You won't fail me now, will you?"

She closed her eyes tightly. It was queer, but for a moment she had had an illusion that instead of Stenson's it was Lion's face looking down into hers. Lion, his dark eyes shining black with love for her. Lion's voice saying with that dear, hoarse note in it: "You're unhappy, lovely. Oh, that you should be unhappy!"

Stenson repeated. "You swear you won't fail me?"

Gin's voice, when she spoke sounded faint and unnatural. "Yes, I swear it, Stenson. I swear I won't fail you. I'll keep my promise."

TO BE CONCLUDED.





# Peggy And Pistols

By Irma Mullens

PEGGY leaned her head against the back of the big easy-chair, and turned the puzzling problem over and over in her mind. Two men were in love with her. Like any normal girl of nineteen, she wanted to get married if and when the right man showed up

in her life. One of these men in love with her was the right one. She was certain of that. But which one?

Four months before there hadn't been any doubt about it at all. Phillip Brent had almost pushed her into a hasty "Yes," with his impetuous love-mak-

ing. He was handsome in a big, blond way. He had blue eyes, curly hair, a strong, square jaw, and a winning smile that displayed a set of perfect white teeth. Phillip was climbing rapidly in the office of the Zenith Steel Company where both he and Peggy worked. Among his coworkers, Phillip was the best-liked man in the Zenith offices. Almost any girl might have been proud and happy to have attracted him, and Peggy had been proud and happy until Bill North entered the situation.

Bill was a friend and college classmate of Phillip's. That hardly does justice to the relation between them; they were chums, buddies. Bill was tall and broad-shouldered with black hair and dark eyes, as good-looking in his dark way as Phillip was in his blond coloring. Peggy liked to close her eyes and let that first evening she had met Bill drift through her mind.

"Peggy, I want you to meet the best fellow in the world," Phillip had said.

Peggy had found herself looking into Bill's eyes. And she knew without asking for information that Bill was O. K. Any friend of Phillip's was certain to be.

"Where did Phil find you?" Bill wanted to know, as he swept her out upon the dance floor of the night club.

"He didn't find me. I found him," Peggy answered brightly.

"Was it like that?"

"Of course. The first time I saw him, I said: 'Here's my man,' and I went after him. It was just like that."

"Then he hasn't got a chance—not with a girl like you after him! I can hear wedding bells in the distance."

"Oh, I don't know that it's that serious," Peggy told him quickly.

"What?" Bill reached up to pull her arm and hand down off his shoulder and examine the fingers of her left hand. "Do you mean that Phil hasn't bought a ring yet? I never knew him to be so slow before! He usually accom-

plishes more in three days than any other man does in a week!"

Peggy could have told him that she had something to do with the delay in this case, but she remained discreetly silent.

"I like brown eyes." Bill pressed his face closer to Peggy's and confided to her a moment later.

"Do you? Sometimes I hate them!" Peggy's eyes were brown.

"And I like brown hair with streaks of red in it under the light," he went on.

Peggy's hair was like that.

"Do you have to say things like this because Phil introduced you to me and is expecting you to be nice?" She drew back to laugh up into his eyes.

"Say, I'm trying to forget that Phil saw you first. Why do you want to keep bringing that up?" His arm tightened about her, drawing her nearer.

"Then you're one of those men who believe in the freedom of America—the best man wins and all that?" she demanded.

For just an instant a quick red colored his dark skin. He understood that she was reminding him of Phil.

Then they were again sitting at a table with Phil, and Phil's blue eyes were making Peggy's head swim as they had the power of doing at times. It was strange but Phil's fine eyes had a way of telling her things, and she could understand without his speaking the words.

Two hours before, she had been sure that Phil was the one man in the world for her. After that dance with Bill, she wasn't so sure. Bill upset her, too.

She saw Bill again three nights later at a party in Phil's apartment. Bill danced more with her that evening than Phil did, and Phil's eyes told her that he understood. During the next week she had two dates with Bill. Phil didn't object. She went out with Phil two nights also. Bill was the salt of the earth, Phil assured her.

A month passed like that—a date with Phil and then one with Bill.

And so that evening little Peggy McGregor had two offers of marriage on her hands, and she couldn't accept either because she wasn't sure which one she wanted. It was like the dress she had bought a few days before. There had been so many dresses that were just what she wanted that it had been hard to select one. Here were two men wholly eligible from her point of view, too eligible in fact. It would be easy to say "Yes" to either one, if the other were out of the way.

That reminded her that it must be nearly time for Phil to come. The past week had been a little difficult. Phil and Bill had both wanted dates on the same night. The relation between them was becoming a bit strained. It could hardly be otherwise. Two close friends wanting to marry the same girl could not remain the same. It wasn't humanly possible.

She got up to powder her nose that didn't need powder at all. A glance at her wrist watch told her that it lacked only three minutes of the time of Phil's arrival. He was never late. At exactly seven forty-five he would ring the doorbell of her aunt's home. Sometimes Bill would be late five, ten, or even fifteen minutes, but not Phil.

Phil came. They sat in the living-room before a cheerful wood fire. Phil drew a small plush box out of his pocket after a while. Peggy knew even before he opened it what it contained.

"You've said 'No' so many times that I thought you might forget and change it to-night," he told her smilingly, as he reached for her hand.

She pulled her finger away from him.

"Please, Phil!" Her eyes met his with a silent plea. "Let's not talk about that to-night."

"I'm afraid we must, Peggy. We can't go on like this!" He held out the ring to her. "Won't you put this

on and settle the whole question to-night, darling?" A little wry smile twisted the corners of his mouth.

She could hardly resist Phil when he looked at her like that. Right now she was almost certain he was the one she loved. Then she remembered that she always felt like that when she was with Phil. But when Bill came she was undecided again.

"I—I just can't decide, Phil." Her hand rested lightly for an instant on his sleeve. "I guess it's babyish of me."

"It's Bill now who's got you wondering, isn't it?" His eyes were staring across the room at a blank spot on the wall. "I can't blame you for that. Bill's just about the best there is."

They were always like that. She closed her eyes. It would be a relief if they would speak the thoughts that must be in their minds. Neither would say a word against the other. If they were in love with her, as they professed to be, surely they couldn't continue to feel so loyal toward each other.

Phil's arm was about her shoulder, pulling her gently to him. Peggy sprang up quickly and went over and turned on the radio.

"Come on, Phil—let's dance."

They moved a table and two chairs out of the way, and danced. Phil danced like a professional. Peggy was always thrilled when she danced with him. She let her head rest on his shoulder while her feet moved to the music. Phil's arm tightened about her. There was something pleasant in the strength of that arm encircling her waist. Always, a sense of security seemed to settle upon her when she was with Phil. Phil was dependable. Like the grandfather's clock in the hall, you would always know where to find him. Bill was of the more adventurous type and always wandering.

"Peggy, I want to ask you something," Phil said. "You needn't an-

swer if you don't want to. Has Bill asked you to marry him?"

Peggy raised her head from his shoulder, looked into his eyes, and let him read the answer in the brown depths of her own eyes.

"I thought so. He would have!"

"Phil! I—I guess we three will just have to go to some country where the law allows a woman to have two husbands. I'm afraid I'm in love with you both."

But Phil's serious blue eyes told her the situation wasn't anything he could be gay about. A little wave of sympathy for him swept over her. She loved Phil when his forehead wrinkled into a little frown of displeasure like that. She felt herself slipping toward him. In another moment, she would have been offering her finger for the ring in his pocket. But like a harsh, discordant note in a beautiful song, the doorbell began to ring. When she went to open the door, Bill stood before her.

"Why—why, Bill, what are you doing here to-night?" Her voice was a little uncertain.

"It's my night to see you, isn't it?" Bill pushed past her into the hall and hung his hat and coat on the rack.

"Bill, I'm sorry. I think you're mistaken. Phil's here." She followed him dubiously up the hall to the living-room door.

"So am I!" Bill's face was grim as he went into the living room.

Peggy stood uncertainly in the door, and watched Bill sit down in a chair across the room from Phil.

"Good evening, Mr. Brent." Bill spoke to Phil.

"Good evening, Mr. North," Phil addressed Bill.

Peggy's hand fluttered to her throat. Before they had met her, they had been as close to each other as brothers; now they were as coldly courteous and formal as strangers. She felt guilty, as though it were something she could

have prevented. It was not pleasant to contemplate her part in the breaking of a fine friendship such as theirs had been.

They were eying each other now much as two prize fighters might have done from opposite corners of a ring. The situation was fraught with possibilities and beyond Peggy's experience. Almost anything might happen, judging from the way they were looking at each other. Each was thinking that the other was being mean. Bill was mistaken, though honestly, of course. What did a girl do, Peggy wondered quickly, when two men who wanted to marry her called on her at the same time, each honestly thinking he had a date with her?

"Well, here we are!" Phil's voice, striving to make conversation, broke the sticky, oppressive silence.

"So it seems." Bill's tone was slightly ironical, and then the silence settled over the room again in thick folds.

Peggy nervously dragged three chairs over before the fire. Both men stood up. Peggy looked at them silently, wishing that one would retire from the scene. Phil took one of the chairs. A faint smile twisted the corners of his mouth, and his eyes told Peggy he understood.

"Some one got the dates mixed," Bill said. He came over to Peggy, put both hands on her shoulders, and shook her slightly. "I'm beginning to think you did it purposely."

Phil was on his feet instantly. Little sparks of fire seemed to dart from his eyes toward Bill. Bill, apparently, did not see him.

"I—I ought to spank you," Bill went on to Peggy. "It's what you need, but it's hardly practical."

"Listen here!" Phil took a quick step toward them.

"Well?" Bill turned his head to look at Phil.

For long moments they glared at each

other, a white-hot wrath in the eyes of both. Peggy squirmed out of Bill's grasp. In another instant they would be mauling each other with their fists in her aunt's living room. She had to do something quickly to avert that.

"Please!" The word was addressed to both. "It was all my fault." She had to take the responsibility on her

shoulders. It was evident that they were blaming each other for the situation. "When I told you to come tonight, Bill, I had forgotten that I had a date with Phil," she explained.

"Then Mr. Brent's date with you was made prior to mine?" Bill asked quickly.

"Oh, yes, really it was! I'm truly sorry, Bill." Peggy's voice was anxious.



*What did a girl do, Peggy wondered, when two men who wanted to marry her called on her at the same time?*

"In that case, perhaps I'd better say good night."

"It isn't necessary. Both of us can stay," Phil offered generously.

Peggy laughed nervously. Her fears had been groundless. She had forgotten for the instant they were too highly civilized to resort to fighting in her aunt's home. It was evident that both were now anxious to smooth over the threatening situation of a moment before.

They sat down with Peggy between them. It seemed after a few moments that without being entirely successful, all three were trying to make conversation. Peggy kept glancing from one to the other. Her indecision was unfair to both of them. The friendship between these two men was being broken up because of her childish inability to choose between them.

She really ought to choose one of them to-night. Her eyes went anxiously to Phil, came back to Bill. It would be horrible if she should choose Phil to-night, for example, and discover that it was Bill she loved. Because both were so splendid, so near, and held the power to upset her so, she was afraid to choose, fearful lest the one she rejected should play a trick on her by becoming the one she loved.

Soon Bill rose to go. She knew that his staying had been merely a gesture to help iron out the difficult situation, just as Phil's suggestion that they both stay had been made only to help them over an awkward moment. Both had seemed to remember in the same instant that they were university men living in the year 1931 when knights in shining armor no longer did violence upon the person of their rival for a lady's favor.

Peggy turned to Phil.

"It really wasn't my fault, Phil," she told him. "Of course, both of you will always think it was."

"No, I won't," he hastened to assure her. "We played on the same football

team at college. I remember the coach sent Bill in once to replace the left half back. Bill sent the quarter back out instead. He's like that. But he's a good scout, one of the best!"

The next day Peggy's Aunt Mary went to bed with the influenza. Her aunt insisted on Peggy's going to work as usual, but Peggy refused. For a week she hovered over her aunt's bed and saw neither Bill nor Phil, while the perplexing question of which one she loved remained unsettled in her mind. It was a strenuous week. Her mind kept going back to Phil and Bill. There were a thousand little things to be done about the house and in her aunt's room. Toward the end of the week she felt that if she could see Bill and Phil, be with them again for an hour or two, she would be able to decide.

It was Phil who called first when her aunt was convalescent. They went to a show and then for a drive in Phil's car. His arm stole about her shoulders while he drove with one hand. She let him draw her toward him, leaned her head on the roughness of his coat. A sense of security stole over her. Phil kissed her. Her lips answered the pressure of his. In that moment she was sure it could be none other than Phil.

"Honey, you—you do love me?" Phil seemed to be having trouble with his voice. He parked the car beside the road. "You're going to marry me, darling?" He was feeling in his pocket for that small plush box.

Bill's gay eyes and the half-mocking smile that could cross his face at times flashed through Peggy's mind. She drew away from Phil's encircling arms as he took the ring out of its box.

"I—I don't know, Phil. I—I can't afford to make a mistake, and I'm not sure."

Phil's eyes narrowed, hardened. His face was grim when he spoke.

"We can't go on like this—at least, I can't!" He backed the car into the

road and swung around in the direction of the city. "I'm going to give you one week longer, Peggy," he told her.

The next evening was Bill's. They sat in the living room, and Bill's eyes kept laughing at her. Then suddenly he was serious.

"Peggy, I love you," he began. He smiled a little wryly. "That's not news to you any longer, is it? Maybe I've bored you telling you so often, but I've got to know to-night!"

Her eyes met his briefly.

"I—I can't tell you, Bill." She drew away from him slightly. "You see, until you came along, I was quite sure that I was in love with Phil. Now—I don't know."

Bill got to his feet to pace back and forth across the room.

"You've got to decide, Peggy! I know what you're thinking—if I hadn't come along, it would have been Phil. You're trying to be fair to him; be fair to me, too! I couldn't help falling in love with you any more than I can help breathing. It was just something that happened to me."

"Oh, I know, Bill! I couldn't help it either—being upset by you."

Quickly, he sat down beside her.

"That's just it, Peggy. If you were really in love with him you couldn't feel toward me as you do."

Peggy considered that. Bill leaned toward her, his eyes pleading with her.

"Don't you see, Peggy? Even if I was Phil's best friend when I met you, I couldn't help falling in love with you. And the very fact that you're unable to decide now is proof that you care for me. You simply won't forget that Phil loved you first."

"No, it isn't like that, Bill. And remember, if I'm unable to choose Phil because of you, I'm unable to choose you because of him."

Bill rose. Little pin points of fire seemed to dart from his eyes as he stared down at her.

"I guess this just about counts the votes," he told her slowly. "If you really cared for me, you'd know you did. Love doesn't hesitate, Peggy. It's always sure of itself." He swung around toward the door.

She hurried over to him, caught his arm.

"Bill!" Her eyes were staring up into his face. "Give me till next Wednesday, please!"

"Peggy, it isn't a question of money, I know, but I could give you everything—trips to Europe, clothes from Paris, anything you'd want!"

"Oh!" The word seemed weak, ineffectual to her. She hadn't known before that Bill was wealthy. She had merely noted that he spent a lot more money than Phil did.

"Peggy!" He took a step toward her. "You know I love you!"

"Yes." She backed away. "I'm not doubting that. But—so does Phillip."

"Till Wednesday then." Bill caught his hat and coat from the rack in the hall, and left the house.

Not till Bill's car had roared away, and she was seated before the fire in the living room again, did Peggy remember that Wednesday was also the day on which Phil had demanded an answer.

During the intervening days, she went out with Phil three evenings and saw Bill twice. She tried to explain to each one that she couldn't see him on Wednesday evening. Both refused to wait longer.

Wednesday came, and she was no nearer a decision. As often as she remembered how dear Phil was, Bill's smiling eyes and half-mocking smile would flash through her mind, and she would be uncertain and wondering again. The suspense was causing a tiny frown to wrinkle her forehead. It threatened to become permanent unless she did something. The day dragged along. Bill was wealthy; Phil was

poor. She must not, she would not let money influence her. Phil earned enough for them to live on and that was all that mattered.

She dressed hurriedly. Both of them would be coming. She was rather glad that that evening would end it, though she was no nearer a decision than she had been a month before.

Phil came first. She had been tempted while she waited to flip a coin. She was in love with them both. But

a quick horror at choosing a husband by such a method swept over her.

"Get on your coat and hat," Phil told her briefly.

"Are we going out? I—I thought perhaps we'd stay here." A quick hope lighted up her face. If she went out with Phil now she wouldn't have to see Bill when he came. It was perhaps as good a way as any to decide the question. Bill would take it as her final answer.



***"The best man won, Phil!" Bill said, "I'm wishing you all the happiness in the world, old man!"***

Yet, she wasn't sure that she wanted him to do that. She put on her coat, gave her close-fitting hat a final pull, and followed Phil out of the house. A little gasp of dismay escaped her lips as she and Phil went down the walk to the street. Bill's car was standing at the curb. And Bill was in it!

Bill opened the door and sprang out to help her in. She hesitated, glancing uncertainly around at Phil. He nodded her on into the car. She got in. Phil climbed into the seat beside her. One was on either side of her with Bill driving. A vague apprehension possessed her. They had planned this without letting her know.

A certain grimness in their eyes when they stole glances at each other warned her. The breach between them had not lessened. The night air was crisp and frosty. She wondered where they were taking her. Bill drove swiftly along the city streets.

None of the three tried to talk much till they were out of the city. The remarks of both men were addressed always to her rather than to each other. Each seemed determined to ignore the other's presence.

"It's funny that a thing like this has got to be settled the way we're going to settle this," Bill remarked after a while.

"Oh! So you're going to decide the question for me?" Peggy did not pretend not knowing what Bill had referred to.

"We're going to help you decide, or if you fail to we're going to decide for you," Phil told her.

"Yes, we can't go on like this," Bill said.

Little patches of snow on open fields flashed along beside them now. It was nearly spring, and the sun of the daylight hours had rapidly melted some of the drifts, but a lot of them still remained. Bill skidded to a stop behind another car parked beside the road.

Both men got out. Peggy shivered a little. There was something ominous in their attitude. Phil's car was parked there. He must have brought it out earlier in the evening, she decided.

Bill took something from a side pocket of the car. Peggy stifled a scream as the white moonlight glinted on two pistols. They couldn't do that! Didn't they know such things weren't done any more?

She glanced nervously from one man to the other. So this was what the widening breach between them had finally brought them to! Once the closest of friends, they had been pushed apart by their love for her. Love had left bitter thoughts against the other in the mind of each until they were ready to resort to violence. Leaning against the car, Phil spoke slowly and in a cold voice:

"You've got five minutes to decide." He pushed his coat sleeve back to look at a luminous-dialed wrist watch. "After that if you fail to decide, we'll be forced to settle the thing our way." His face was grimly determined as he glanced around at Bill.

Peggy wanted to scream. This thing they proposed to do was horrible. When they had seemed on the verge of fighting in her aunt's living room, she had averted that by taking the blame for the situation on herself. She couldn't do that now. It was evident that they had planned this situation for themselves.

"But, Phil——" Her voice trailed off. She felt weakly ineffectual. Anything she could do except choose one of them would be like adding fuel to flame.

The ticking of Phil's watch reached her ears in the deathly stillness of the white moonlight. She glanced at Bill and back to Phil. Each seemed dearer at that moment than ever before.

"It will be perfectly fair," Bill assured her. "We'll put our backs to-

gether, walk ten paces while one of us counts, and then turn and fire!"

"Oh!" The word was only half screamed. "You can't do that! Don't you see? I—I can't marry either one of you if you go on with this!"

"Well, it will at least settle the differences between Phil and myself." Bill's voice was as crisp as his footsteps in the patch of snow beside the road.

"That's right. The world's getting too small to hold both of us." Phil's voice was like ice.

She could understand how Phil felt. Before his best friend had come along and confused her, she had been in love with him. Phil knew that. She had admitted to him that she had intended to marry him before she met Bill.

"Do you think you can get away with it?" she pleaded with them. "The law doesn't stand for duels any more. You're not living in the eighteenth century!"

Phil glanced at his watch.

"Time's up!" he announced.

Bill held out both pistols. Phil selected one silently and stepped upon the bank beside the road. Both pulled off their overcoats and threw them on the snow for more freedom of movement. Tall and straight, like two soldiers, they stood for an instant with their backs together. Then they walked directly away from each other with a slow measured tread. Bill's voice counted monotonously:

"One—two—three—four—"

The back of Peggy's right hand flew up unconsciously to her lips to half stifle the scream that escaped her lips. It would be Phil who would go down with the first shot. Bill was quick-moving. He would turn first. Phil would sink down limply as he received the bullet. A swift red would begin to disolor the whiteness of the snow.

"Five—six—" Bill's calm voice counted on with the inevitability of the passage of time.

Peggy sat in the car as if frozen. A queer numbness possessed her. She couldn't move. The police would arrest Bill. It would be murder, manslaughter at the least, in the eyes of the law. Yet, it was not of Bill she was thinking; it was of Phil, with his steady blue eyes, his quick smile. She could picture Bill's mocking smile as he stood above Phil's body.

"Seven—eight—" Bill was still counting after the eternity that had passed.

Abruptly, she was out of the car and struggling along in satin slippers that were not made for snow. She was going straight to Phil and screaming something. She had to get to Phil ahead of that bullet Bill would be sending at him. The chill of the snow penetrated her thin silk stockings above her shoes. She was unconscious of it.

Phil's arms closed around her. Bill was coming toward them. Silently he held out his hand to Phil. Phil gripped it hard with his free hand, while he pressed Peggy's slim form closer with his other arm. Peggy glanced uncertainly from one to the other.

"The best man won, Phil!" Bill said. "I'm wishing you all the happiness in the world, old man!"

"But I—I thought—" A vast sense of relief and contentment had settled upon Peggy now that her choice was made. There was no doubt left. It was Phil she loved.

"You thought we were ready to kill each other because we were both in love with you?" Phil was smiling down into her eyes. "Why should we blame each other for that? You're enough to make any man fall hard."

"No, it wasn't like that, Peggy." Bill held out his hand to her. "We simply took a hunch from old King Solomon. Remember that baby he wanted to cut in two pieces to discover which mother loved it? We used the same method to learn which one of us you really

cared for." He smiled ruefully. "I guess there isn't any doubt left, and I'm wishing you and Phil all the happiness there is!" Bill turned and strode away for three or four steps, hesitated, and spoke to them over his shoulder. "I'm trying to take it like a good sport," he assured them, "but please don't ask me to be best man at the wedding!" There was just the faintest break in Bill's voice.

An instant later Bill's car roared away. Phil's face bent over Peggy's.

"My darling!" he whispered, and his lips closed down upon hers.

"Phil! I don't know why I couldn't decide," Peggy told him. "I'm sure now it was you I loved all the time."

"Perhaps it was Bill's telling you he was wealthy that helped you to decide. I can just see you leaning over back-

ward toward me after he told you that! You wanted to be sure that money had nothing to do with it. I think he pulled a bad one there." Phil laughed. "But now that you've decided to become Mrs. Brent anyway, I don't see where it can hurt my chances with you to tell you that my dad has two or three million also, and that we won't be exactly paupers."

Peggy looked at him with wide, adoring eyes.

"Why didn't you tell me before? What if I had decided in Bill's favor because I knew he was wealthy and I wouldn't have to starve?"

"But, honey, you didn't!" Phil kissed her again and again. "Which goes to prove that along with my vegetables, I know my sweet, adorable little Peggy!"



#### **BEWARE—SOFT SHOULDERS**

**D**RIVING along one day I came  
Upon a large sign hanging high:  
"Beware—Soft Shoulders Just Ahead,"  
And then to you my thoughts must fly.

You, with your large, clear eyes so blue,  
In evening gown of charming style,  
Your soft young shoulders gleaming white,  
Your sweet, red lips and dazzling smile.

"Watch out," I told myself. "Watch out;  
There's danger here, dear boy, for you,  
You can't expect one look from her—  
Detour—soft shoulders." This I knew.

But I went straight ahead, dear one,  
Hopelessly fell in love with you,  
No danger now, though, just pure joy,  
Because I've learned you love me, too.

**LORNA TALLENT KIDWELL.**



# Skyscraper Romance

By Hazlett Kessler

**T**HREE'S our boy friend across the way, Margery!" exclaimed Hazel.

During a lull in business the two salesgirls employed at the Mammoth Hosiery Company's branch shop in a Madison Avenue skyscraper were looking out of a window of their fifteenth-story room. The manager, Mr. Simon, was absent at the moment.

Margery turned large brown eyes from a survey of the lively street scene in the canyon below. She stared across the street to a certain sixteenth-story window where a young man waved a hand at her.

As she looked, Hazel waved back and the young man smiled widely. Then having accomplished the feat of attracting their attention with sweeping motions of one hand he wrote letters in the air—letters which slowly formed words.

"How—are—you?" The silent conversation began.

"O. K.," Hazel's fingers moved in laconic reply.

"How—about—lunch—with—me?"

"O. K.," Hazel repeated.

He looked at Margery. "Both?" his hand wrote.

But in response Margery shook her head.

The young man's smile disappeared. He made a long face.

"Come on, Marge," urged Hazel. "Be a sport. We'll have some fun."

Then the young man pantomimed another question. He held up one finger and encircled it with another.

As the girls caught his meaning, they smiled.

"Married?" he had asked Margery.

A wild-rose color came into her cheeks. She shook her head again.

Hazel now interrogated the young man across the street. Her fingers asked:

"Are you?"

His hands eloquently replied in the negative. In fact, his gestures were most emphatic.

But Hazel had not lost sight of the proffered invitation to lunch. She pointed to the street below, then held up one saucy finger.

Carefully watching her, the young man nodded his head with understanding. He indicated that he would meet her outside the building at one o'clock sharp.

Then again he silently begged Margery to come along, too. But she suddenly turned from the window, as the door of the room opened and a customer entered.

Waiting on the woman, Margery sold two pairs of sheer hose of the shade called "Morning Mist."

When the customer had gone and the two girls were alone again, Hazel told Margery gleefully:

"He's not so slow, is he? Well, believe me, this child's not passing up any lunch bids that happen to be floating around! I got plenty of other uses for the forty cents I have to shell out at the drug-store counter every noon." She grinned, and patted her bobbed blond hair with her fingers.

Margery smiled in response.

"I don't see why you won't go, Marge," continued Hazel. "What's the harm? We can have a good time with him."

"Oh"—Margery shrugged slim shoulders—"I don't know. I—I don't want to."

"Bashful?" asked Hazel. "You just leave him to me, honey, I'll do the talking."

"No, not that—only—"

"I know," Hazel interrupted, glancing wisely at Margery. "You've got a steady sweetheart, and you don't think it's right to go anywhere with another man."

"Well—"

"Far be it from me, then, to lead you astray. You suit yourself, Marge, but as for me, I'm going!"

"I hope you have a good time," Margery said sincerely.

"Huh!" responded Hazel. "It's probably you he fell for."

"No."

"Yes, it'll be just my luck. You'll see. I bet he'll ask me to fix it up for him to meet you."

Margery colored slightly.

"Well," continued Hazel, "I don't care. I'll get a lunch or two out of it, anyway. And if he doesn't fall for me, I'll be no worse off than I am now," she said philosophically.

"Don't worry; he won't ask about me," said Margery.

"If he does, what'll I tell him?" asked Hazel. "That you're tied up with—"

"Don't you dare tell him anything!"

"I was just kidding you, honey," Hazel grinned. "Besides, you might change your mind, you know."

Their conversation ceased then, with the arrival of Mr. Simon. In a short while, Margery went out to an early lunch.

Perched on a high stool before a drug-store fountain, she slowly munched a sandwich. As she ate, she

stared at her own reflection in the mirror facing her.

In spite of a rather wistful look in her brown eyes, it was a very pleasing reflection. The delicate contours of her features held a quiet beauty. And there was an unobtrusive charm in the poise of the small, well-shaped head surmounted with a smart little hat of black grosgrain.

If she were like Hazel, thought Margery, she would not be sitting there with only her mirrored image for company.

She had denied Hazel's imputation of bashfulness. Yet it was chiefly shyness that had prevented Margery from accepting the strange young man's invitation.

Then, too, there was Harry.

But Harry really shouldn't object if she did happen to take lunch with some one else, she told herself. There would be no harm in it. And Harry himself couldn't take her. The shop where he worked was too far uptown.

Often she wished that Harry weren't working at a flower shop, although it was nice to have the fresh flowers with which he so frequently provided her.

But florists had such long hours. Harry never knew for sure when he would be through with his work in the evening.

Sometimes, when it was his turn to be off early, he would be disappointed. And that meant that Margery would be disappointed, too. When they had planned in advance to go somewhere, it was annoying. But as Harry said, it couldn't be helped. The florist business was like that.

Usually, Harry was only able to see her two or three nights a week, at the most. And sometimes she didn't see him for a whole week.

Of course, he would telephone. But there wasn't much fun in that.

Actually, Margery spent a good many evenings at home alone, and often she

would wish she were out riding, or dancing, or seeing a show.

It had been—Margery thought a moment—yes, it had been a month since she and Harry had been to a theater.

She sighed as she finished sipping her cup of hot chocolate. She decided that she had better be going back to the shop, so that Hazel could go out to lunch—and meet the young man across the way.

"His name is Wayne Martin," Hazel told Margery late that afternoon.

Business had been brisk at the hosier shop throughout the afternoon, and under the watchful eye of Mr. Simon, the girls had not had the opportunity for even a moment's private conversation. But finally the manager had left on a trip to the main office.

"And, Marge," exclaimed Hazel, seemingly breathless now from holding in her information for so long, "he's got a car!"

Margery smiled at her companion's eager manner, and waited to hear more.

"He's really a peach, Marge. And good looking—I'll say! You should have gone." Hazel stopped a second, then went on: "Oh, it's just the way I said it would be—"

"What do you mean?"

"It's you he fell for; that's what I mean." Hazel made a wry face. "He said he'd drive us home some night."

"Where did you go to-day?" asked Margery.

Hazel told her, and launched into a course-by-course description of her luncheon. When she had finished with its details, she said:

"Say, I hope he asks me soon again. But I bet he won't, unless you'll come along."

"Why," said Margery, "I wouldn't want to interfere—"

Hazel laughed. "You can't take anything from me that I haven't got! Don't you think I could tell, the way



*"There's our boy friend across the way, Margery!" exclaimed Hazel.*

he kept trying to have me talk about you?"

Margery shrugged. "Maybe it's your imagination."

"No; my insight." Hazel sighed. "You wait and see."

In spite of herself Margery was a bit thrilled by what Hazel had told her. It was flattering to think that a strange young man had become interested in her, especially when he had only seen her from across the street. But, also, it made her self-conscious about looking out of the window when the occasional opportunity for that diversion came.

**LS-9C**

Two evenings later when Margery and Hazel, homeward-bound, emerged from their skyscraper confine, they encountered the young man from across the way.

Blushing slightly, Margery laughingly acknowledged the introduction given Wayne Martin by her companion. He was good looking, indeed, she thought, as he stood before them, hat in hand.

There was an unconscious arrogance in the lift of his head, with its dark, wavy hair. His almost chiseled features could not help but win a second glance from any girl. And his eyes,

Margery noted, as he stared at her eagerly, were a bright, clear blue.

"My old boat's around the corner," he told them. "Going to let me drive you home?"

"Lead us to it," responded Hazel, as she squeezed Margery's arm.

Margery only smiled, but that was sufficient assent for the young man. He quickly escorted them down the side street where his coupé was parked.

When they were seated in the car, he turned to Hazel, who was next to him.

"Whereabouts is your place?" he asked her.

"Twenty-ninth Street."

He looked past her at Margery. "And you?" he said.

"Eighty-third," she answered.

"O. K.," he said. "I live 'way up on the Drive myself." He glanced at Hazel. "Well, yours is the first stop," he told her, as he pressed his foot on the starter.

Hazel's bubbling chatter furnished most of the conversation until they reached the West Side apartment house where she lived with her family.

Margery wished that she were as ready a conversationalist as the other girl, as she sat quietly beside Wayne Martin. But driving the car through the heavy traffic uptown occupied most of his attention. He said little except at the intervals when they were halted by the red lights. Before they reached her place, he asked her:

"How about taking a ride Sunday afternoon? We could make it a foursome if that suits you better. I can manage to bring a friend along. What do you say?"

"I'm sorry; I've got an engagement," Margery told him. She was going with Harry to see a new talking picture.

"Are you sure?" questioned Wayne Martin, looking at her quizzically.

"Of course!"

"Well, some other time then?" he insisted. "Or are you always busy?"

"No-o," she said, and smiled. If he only knew how many nights she stayed at home!

"All right, I'll try again some time," he said.

Margery wondered if he would. She hadn't given him much encouragement. As she got out of the car in front of the red-brick building where she had a room, she told him smilingly:

"Thanks very much for the ride. It beats being in the subway crush."

"I should hope so," he smiled back at her. "Well, I'll drive you home any night you say," he offered.

"I won't refuse!" she said brightly.

Alone in her room on Sunday afternoon, Margery thought longingly of the automobile ride which she had declined. For Harry had gone out of town with a load of funeral flowers; possibly he would be back in time to take her to dinner late that evening, but that was all.

When he had phoned her, she had let him know how disappointed she was —more than that, too, for she was angry, not at Harry, of course, but at circumstances.

The fact that she had had Wayne Martin's invitation made it more difficult to reconcile herself to a lonesome afternoon. As she washed out stockings and underwear, she felt sorry for herself. Harry, she thought fiercely, had better not cancel their next date!

The day—which happened to be Wednesday—had not been a smooth one at the Mammoth's Madison Avenue shop. Margery was tired of customers who pawed and fussed. She was tired, too, of hearing the eternal plaint: "These stockings ran the very first time I wore them!" Why couldn't they sometimes say the second or third time, at least, just for variety?

She had put off having a manicure, and before she had noticed it, a rough finger nail had caught one of a pair of

dollar-thirty-nines she was showing. Now she'd have the stocking to pay for, and the manicure besides. That did not improve her humor.

When the man to whom Margery had just sold six pairs left, the shop was free of customers for the moment. Turning to Margery, Hazel grinned and gave what she fancied was an imitation of a barking dog.

"Marge, I see you sold him several puppies!" she said, using the hosiery-trade term for stock in out-of-date shades.

Margery smiled wanly. "Usually I haven't the heart, but to-day I feel vicious!"

The telephone rang, and she answered. It was Harry calling her. Before he said anything, she knew that he was going to tell her that he had to work that evening. As he apologized for breaking their date, she interrupted:

"Oh, don't bother coming late. I'm tired, anyway."

She hung up the receiver and turned away to a window. As she looked out, her eyes misted. She fought back the desire to cry with disappointment and anger and fatigue.

When her vision cleared, she saw Wayne Martin in a window across the way. She waved at him. Before she left the window, she had arranged to meet him at closing time.

He was waiting at the entrance when she left the building with Hazel. He drove down to West Twenty-ninth Street first.

After he had dropped the other girl and was headed uptown, he asked Margery:

"Busy to-night?"

It was the question she had been hoping to hear, and at the words her spirits began to lighten.

"Not at all!" she answered swiftly.

Stopping at a traffic light, he looked at her, and she returned his glance, waiting.

"Just yearning to go places and do things?" he asked, and smiled with an amused twinkle in his very blue eyes.

"Absolutely!" She put all shyness behind her.

"It's a date then?"

She nodded. "If you like," she said demurely.

"Fine!" he responded. "Well, what'll it be? Want to dance?"

"I—I'm rather tired to-night."

"A hard day?" He looked at her sympathetically. "Say," he suggested, "do you need to go home for dinner? If not, I know a nice, quiet little place in the Village. We could eat, and then go to a movie somewhere."

"Oh, I'd like to!" she agreed eagerly.

Some moments later, Wayne Martin smiled at her across a cozy, white-clothed table for two. "What is a little peach like you doing all day in the big business world, selling stockings? I thought I'd find out you were a model or something."

Margery laughed to hide her momentary confusion and the wild-rose color flamed in her cheeks.

"Right now," he said swiftly, "you look like a magazine-cover girl!"

Margery's blush became deeper, much to her chagrin. "You—I suppose this is the line you always use, isn't it?"

"You wrong me, woman!" He looked at her with mock sternness. Then with apparent seriousness, he told her: "No, I mean it. I never say what I don't mean, believe it or not!"

She smiled and said saucily: "Well, let's talk about you for a change. What do you do—across the way?"

"Oh—that's an architect's office where I hang out. I'm just one of the hired hands though. But let's talk about something pleasant—my good luck, for instance."

"Good luck?" she said uncertainly, while she admired his assured, masterful manner. "What—"

"Getting you to fall for me at last,"

he put in. "I was beginning to give up hope. It's a tough life, anyway, for us poor guys; we're bound to stack up rather small beside these movie heroes." He smiled at her wryly.

"Now you're fishing!" she exclaimed. "Why, I'll bet you've got a whole list of girls' telephone numbers!"

"Yes—you think so?" But he did not deny her statement. Instead, his very blue eyes looked into hers. "There's one sweet number I'm wanting now—that's yours!"

Margery could not help but be a bit thrilled as she gave it to him and watched him write it down carefully. Of course, he didn't mean those flattering things he persisted in saying; pretty girls were at no premium in New York. Yet it was nice to hear them, anyway!

After dinner, they went to one of the newest Broadway picture theaters—a palace whose luxurious appointments would have won the envy of any monarch of old!

In the magic world of entertainment the routine of everyday life seemed very far away. Margery thoroughly enjoyed every moment of the program—the pictured romance with its tuneful songs, the selections played on the magnificent organ, the latest crooning melodies from the smooth jazz orchestra, the singers, dancers, and clever comedians introduced by the noted master of ceremonies.

A bit of the beauty and glamour clung to Margery and Wayne Martin when they came out of the theater. Gayly they rode uptown, threading their way through the pleasure traffic, amid the night brilliance of the city.

In an incredibly short time, it seemed, they were before her house in Eighty-third Street.

"I've had a wonderful evening!" Margery's brown eyes glowed.

"Now I'll tell one," he responded, smiling widely. "I'm glad you stood it so bravely."

"No, I mean it. I say what I mean, too," she told him boldly.

"I wish you would—as long as it's something nice. But then a sweet thing like you couldn't say anything that wasn't nice!"

"How do you know?" she asked archly. "You haven't had time—"

"Time!" he interrupted. "That's just it—I'm 'way behind time. Here I've been wandering around all my young life, and just now found you! I've got a lot of time to make up, woman!"

Margery laughed. "Well—you've got my number," she reminded him.

"And I'll be practicing it on my phone dial right often—don't worry! But I bet I'll be getting the busy signal."

Her brown eyes looked with invitation into his very blue ones. "Try it and see!" she said.

Margery told Hazel about her evening, while the two girls were arranging stock the following morning.

"I said you might change your mind, didn't I?" Hazel smoothed her blond hair with an habitual gesture. "You're only young once," she added. "Better take all the fun you can get."

"That's just what I'm going to do!"

Several nights after work Wayne Martin drove her home in his coupé. And one night the following week, he called for her at the red brick house and took her to a popular dancing place.

Again Margery enjoyed a gay evening. If occasionally a thought of Harry intruded, the pleasure she was having suppressed any qualms she might have had regarding his opinion.

Not until the next morning did the slightest cloud appear on her horizon.

Just before she left the house, the landlady called to her to tell Margery that Harry had been at the house the night before and found her gone.

She merely thanked Mrs. Nelson for the information and went her way, apparently unconcerned. She didn't in-

tend to let the woman see that she was at all perturbed; at least, she wouldn't give Mrs. Nelson the satisfaction.

But during the day Margery kept wondering what the landlady might have told Harry. No doubt Mrs. Nelson had informed him that a strange young man with a car had been calling lately; that was all the landlady knew, and she would certainly say no less, Margery thought with a wry grimace.

She reached that conclusion because she was aware that Mrs. Nelson liked Harry. At different times when he had come to the house to see Margery, he had brought the landlady flowers.

Harry was like that—doing nice little things for people without expecting any return. It was one of the things Margery liked about him. Everybody who knew Harry seemed to think he was a fine chap. And he was!

Margery kept hoping that Harry would telephone her, but she received no call. She trusted he wouldn't be angry. He really had no right to be. It was no fun staying in her room alone so many evenings. She would tell him that. Surely Harry would understand.

That night when the doorbell rang, Margery hurried to answer the sum-



*Perched on a high stool before a drug-store fountain, she slowly munched a sandwich. As she ate, she stared at her own reflection in the mirror facing her.*

mons, as Mrs. Nelson had gone out. Opening the door, Margery gave a gasp of glad surprise.

"Harry!" Impulsively she grasped his arm. "Come in!"

"I didn't know whether I'd find you at home or not," was his greeting.

His wide gray eyes regarded her soberly. He looked stern, but, perhaps, she thought, it was just her imagination. To hide her slight confusion, she spoke quickly.

"We'll have the sitting room all to ourselves. I was hoping you'd come, but I hardly expected it. I'm awfully sorry you missed me last night. Why didn't you phone?"

While she was speaking, she led him down the hallway into the lighted room, noticing that he failed to put an arm around her as they went.

She took his hat and placed it on top of the piano. Harry sank down in a large leather chair, and Margery seated herself on the sofa, facing him.

"How are you, Harry?" she asked him. "You—you look a bit tired."

He stared at her without replying.

"What's the matter?" she exclaimed  
"That's what I want to find out!"

"Why, Harry, what do you mean?" He had never before spoken to her in that tone; it made her lips tremulous.

"You know!" he said accusingly.

Margery was silent, her cheeks suddenly flushed.

"How long have you been stepping out with some one else?" he demanded.

At his sharp question, angry lights appeared in her brown eyes.

"Well," she retorted, "one thing's certain—I haven't had much chance to step out with you!"

"Anyway, I haven't been going out with any other girl."

"You'd find another girl wouldn't stand for having dates broken all the time," returned Margery.

"That's not the trouble," he said. "You know what my work is. It's no

different now from what it has been. You didn't complain before."

"I suppose there has to be a first time for everything," she shrugged.

"Margery, how did you get this way?" His voice was sharp, but his eyes were puzzled and hurt.

"Any girl in my place would, Harry. You don't know how lonesome it is to work all day and then sit in my room all evening, alone. You shouldn't begrudge me the opportunity to have a little fun."

"I guess you haven't been sitting alone much lately."

"You haven't any right to say that, just because I wasn't here last night. Why didn't you let me know you were coming?"

"Maybe it's a good thing I didn't. I found out something."

"Honestly, Harry," she said pleadingly, "do you think it's fair for you to object, when I don't see you in a whole week sometimes?"

"If you cared about me, you'd be willing to stay at home. You wouldn't want to go out with some one else!"

"You talk as if I were married to you!"

He laughed bitterly. "My mistake, I guess. I suppose it's best that I found it out in time."

"If that's the way you feel—yes," she replied swiftly with stung pride.

"Margery, is that—is that all you've got to say?"

"I've tried to tell you—"

"Oh, you've told me all right—that you weren't satisfied with what I could give you. Well—"

"I never said that! Oh, you're making a mountain out of a molehill!"

Harry suddenly got to his feet. His tall figure confronted her.

"I won't have my girl going out with some one else!"

"I pity the girl you do have!"

For an instant their glances met and clashed angrily. Then he grabbed his

hat from the piano and strode out of the room without looking back. A moment later Margery heard the outside door close.

She sat still rigid, staring at the chair which Harry had just vacated. Oh, it didn't seem possible that anything which had been so enduring could crumple in a short half hour!

Why had she ever spoken to Harry like that? But why hadn't he understood a little?

If only he hadn't taken that hard tone with her from the beginning! If only he had been his usual self, she wouldn't have lost her temper, or said anything to hurt him. But he had hurt her first, cruelly.

Two large tears rolled down her cheeks. With a sudden sob, she flung herself down on the sofa, hiding her face in her arms.

Resolutely in the days that followed, Margery tried to crowd all thoughts of Harry out of her mind. She accepted every invitation Wayne Martin offered her. Usually his car brought her home after work, and several evenings a week she went somewhere with him.

For a while she did not have much opportunity to be lonesome. With Wayne, she was having more good times than she had had previously. Pleasure seemed to be his chief interest in life. He was not at all like Harry.

Wayne wanted a gay companion, and Margery played up. She sometimes reflected that Hazel would have suited him better. He was like Hazel, not interested in anything but the enjoyment of the moment.

Margery often felt with a slight pang that Wayne was just the same to her as he had been the first time she had gone out with him. Then he had been an attractive stranger, offering an evening's diversion. And now in a lot of ways he still seemed more or less of a stranger. She didn't know whether

she was any more to him than some one to dance with, to share automobile rides.

But that, she told herself decidedly, was all right. When a couple became serious and meant a tremendous lot to each other, then something always happened to make them unhappy.

One thing was certain—she didn't have to worry about Wayne's being serious. He took life lightly. He seemed to regard everything solely from the point of view of what fun he could get out of it.

That was the way she suspected, that he looked at her. But she didn't seem to mind much; Wayne was so nice to her, showed her so many good times.

Occasionally a terrifying thought obtruded itself—that he might tire of her. For reassurance, she looked for signs of any change of his attitude toward her.

When he met her now, there wasn't so much eagerness in his manner as there had been on the night of their first date. But that was only natural. She decided not to worry. Yet she could not help wondering what would happen if he took a fancy to another girl as he had to her.

It was not so very long, after all, before she learned the answer.

There came a period when she had no dates with Wayne for nearly three weeks. In that time he had driven her home after work on several occasions, yet he had never asked her to go anywhere with him in the evening.

Reluctantly Margery admitted to herself then the depressing probability that some other girl had captured his interest. Apparently there could be no other reason for the waning of his attentions.

Unless—the thought finally came to her—unless, for some cause, he wanted to save money. With Wayne, that wasn't likely, but it might be so.

In that case, she wished he would

come to the apartment to see her. She'd be glad to spend the evening with him there. He didn't need to think he always had to take her some place.

She watched for a glimpse of him at the window across the way, but did not see him often. Perhaps he was rather avoiding her because he wasn't able to take her out just now.

She wanted to ask him to call some time and spend the evening with her. But she hesitated. If there were another girl—

Perhaps Margery would never have summoned the courage to issue her invitation, if she had not been in an out-of-sorts mood one evening when Wayne chanced to bring her home from work.

She had been low-spirited and listless all day. Her throat ached and she had felt chilled most of the time, although the others seemed to think the shop was warm enough.

In the blue mood which gripped her, it seemed that she might as well find out about Wayne and end the uncertainty. There was no use spending any more time wondering.

But when she asked him, he informed her that he was busy every night the remainder of the week.

With an effort, Margery smiled and summoned a light manner. One had to be light and gay with Wayne, otherwise he grew angry and difficult.

"Who's the blonde?" She laughed as she put the question to him.

"No blonde; a redhead this time," he retorted in kind. "Nothing like variety, you know."

"No, I suppose not," she answered.

"Why?" He looked at her quizzically. "Don't tell me you've missed me!"

She laughed again as if his question were really absurd. "Why not?" she said.

He grinned. "With that face, you could never be lonesome. I know I'm just giving the other boys a break."

Margery was silent a moment, holding on to her pride. She knew she must never let Wayne learn that she had been depending on him alone for her good times.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "You're not sore, I hope?"

"Sore? Why should I be?" She laughed weakly. "I wish you luck, that's all," she added.

"Thanks. You're O. K., Marge," he paid her tribute after his fashion.

Margery said good-by lightly, with her head lifted and a bright smile on her lips. But as she tripped up the steps of her house, she could think of nothing except one tormenting phrase. "Going down with colors flying!" That was what a girl had to do, if she had pride.

Colors flying—in spite of a bruised spirit, a throat that ached horribly, and sudden tears that made her grope her way, once she was inside the house.

The doctor told Margery the next day that it was tonsilitis and that she should stay in bed. She didn't argue; she felt content to lie still and do nothing.

If she could just have stopped thinking, it would have been all right. But that was impossible. And the only relief from that was to hide her face and cry softly into her pillow.

It wasn't so much Wayne's defection that caused her tears. He had given her the air; that was a blow, of course. Yet she realized clearly now that the blow was only to her pride—not to her heart.

But now, without Wayne, she had to face the truth. Her life was empty. And the terrifying emptiness which her heart knew was not a thing of yesterday. It had been with her ever since she had lost Harry.

She had gone on with Wayne, trying to substitute mere good times for the sweeter companionship she had shared

with Harry. Harry, who had really cared for her! And now she could no longer deny the tormenting truth—that no other man could take the place which he had held in her heart.

Margery's thoughts were bad company, as she lay there in her room for several days without having a visitor. She rejoiced when Hazel came on the third evening. She brought Margery her pay envelope.

"You're the first person I've seen," Margery told her.

"Is that the truth? Honey, I'm sorry I didn't get up here before," Hazel chattered. "Say, I saw Wayne and told him you were home, sick. I thought he might come up to see you."

Margery shook her head with a wry little smile. "The novelty's worn off, so he's doing a fade-out."

"Say, I didn't know. Well, you should worry," Hazel said lightly, but she glanced at Margery with friendly, concerned eyes that belied her flippant words.

"Don't you see Harry any more?" Hazel asked after a pause.

Margery shook her head slowly, and her eyes misted.

"Maybe he'd come now if he knew you were sick."

"But how could he know? I couldn't—" Margery stopped.

"Honey, I'm sorry! I feel sort of guilty. If I hadn't urged you to—to get acquainted with Wayne, maybe—"

"No, I didn't need to do it, if I hadn't wanted to."

Hazel quickly changed the conversation into cheerier channels. Retailing the foibles of customers at the hosiery shop, she soon had Margery smiling again.

"You hurry up and get well and come back," Hazel said on leaving. "And don't let yourself be blue now, do you hear?"

Margery was surprised late the next afternoon when a box of flowers came

to her, with Hazel's name on the enclosed card. It was certainly sweet of Hazel, she thought, and she appreciated it.

But tears suddenly came to her eyes at the sight of the white glazed-paper box with the florist's name in gold-embossed letters. It was from the firm where Harry worked!

Well, that was natural enough, after all. Hazel had ordered flowers there before, when Margery had been going with Harry.

How familiar the sight of those boxes had once been! There had been shoulder bouquets from Harry, dainty, artistic, fragrant. And once before, when she had been ill, Harry had sent her a box of flowers every day. She remembered now a remark the landlady had made about his solicitude.

When Mrs. Nelson put Hazel's flowers in a vase, she looked at Margery as if she were thinking, too, of that other time.

"I—I think I'll sit up a while," Margery told her suddenly.

She was still sitting in the chair the landlady had fixed with cushions when, shortly after Margery had put aside her dinner tray, a knock sounded on the door.

"Come in," she called, expecting to see Mrs. Nelson stopping in for the tray of dishes.

The door opened slowly and revealed to Margery's amazed eyes a tall, sturdy figure.

"Harry!" she gasped, sudden color flooding her cheeks.

He stepped inside, hat in one hand, and holding in the other a long, narrow flower box. He stood before her hesitantly.

"How are you, Margery? I didn't know you were sick, until Hazel phoned this morning. I—I brought you some flowers. I—"

"What did Hazel say?" she asked swiftly.



*"What is a little peach like you doing all day in the big business world, selling stockings?"*

"She thought I'd like to know you were sick. No—I don't mean I'm glad you're sick. Oh, you know what I mean!" He lifted the box lid and drew aside the tissue lining to reveal the blooms beneath. "Here, how's that?"

"Beautiful!" Margery's glance sped quickly from the gorgeous mass of spring flowers to Harry's serious gray eyes. She stretched out her hands. "Harry, come here!"

As he approached close to her chair, Margery's hands went out and clasped his arms. Her face lifted toward his.

"I don't mind being sick, if it brings you back to me!" she whispered.

Her hands went around his neck, and she pulled his head down until his lips were against her own.

"Margery!" he exclaimed, when he moved back a little to look into her face. His eyes reflected the light that was in her own, as he said:

"You mean that?" There was a joyful ring in his voice.

"And more," she cried, "much more! Oh, Harry, say you forgive me!"

"I guess I was as much wrong as you were," he said slowly. "But I was angry; it hurt me to know you'd go out with some one else, Margery." His voice reproached her.

"Oh, Harry, I didn't think. I had no idea——"

"When I thought it over, I wanted to see you and try to make it up. But I was afraid you didn't care."

"There wasn't anybody but you, Harry. And there won't be, ever. I know that now. I couldn't forget you, no matter how hard I tried."

"Sweetheart! How I missed you, Margery!"

He held her close, as if he would never let her go, and sought her responsive lips again.

And after a little while Margery insisted on telling him how she had become acquainted with Wayne Martin and how she happened to go out with him.

"I know I didn't take you anywhere very often," Harry admitted. "But when I was too busy to go places, I just thought that, anyway, I could save that much faster. And I've got about enough money in the bank now to get married on, if I can find the girl."

"Where are you going to look for her?" She could speak lightly, now that the magic of Harry's arms had driven the ache from her heart.

"I'm looking at her right now." His wide gray eyes twinkled. "How would you like to get out of the stocking business and be manager of a little house somewhere in the suburbs?"

"Oh, Harry!"

"But, remember, dear, you won't have any more chances for skyscraper romance." He smiled at her, as her color deepened and her glance dropped.

"Once was enough!" she confessed penitently. "It brought me down to earth, and that's where I want to be—with you!"

Harry regarded her seriously. "Don't forget what my job is. I'll have to keep you waiting many a time."

"But it'll be different," she said, "very different, when I know that I'll see you every day, no matter what time you get through work. If you'll just promise me that, I'll never complain about waiting!"

"All right; I promise that you'll see me every day," Harry said, smiling. Then as an afterthought, he added: "Every day, dear, except Christmas and

Easter weeks—you know I wouldn't even have time to go to my own funeral then!"

For a moment they looked at each other, lost in the silent wonder of their love. And then Harry swept her into his arms and held her close.

"Darling, darling, I love you so!" he whispered. "I've wanted you so all this time we've been separated. All the light seemed to have gone out of my life when you were gone. There seemed nothing to work for, nothing to strive for. O Margery, you give life its meaning, its gladness. Say you'll really marry me in a little while!"

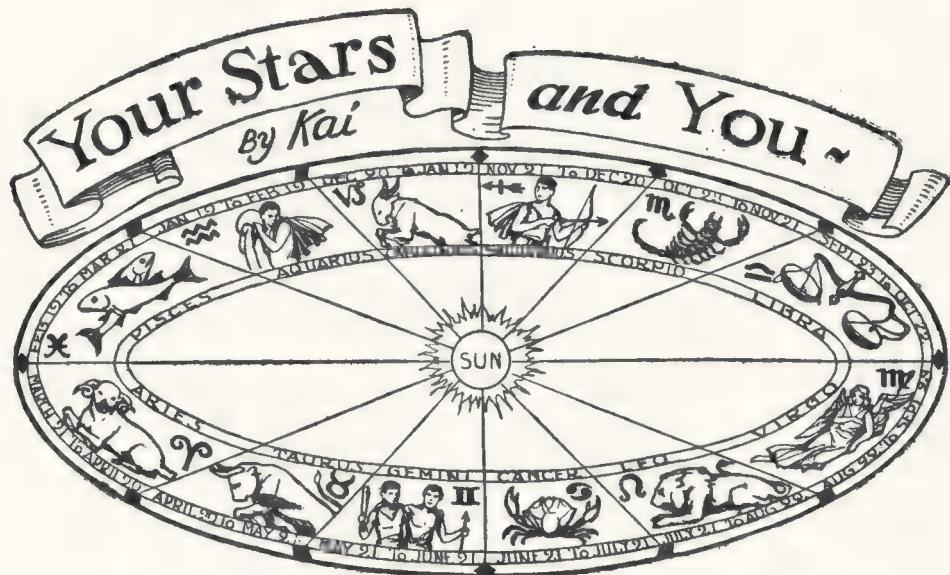
"Oh, I will!" Margery looked up at him, her eyes filled with tears. "Harry, I love you so much."

He found her lips, and for a long moment everything but love seemed to fade into unreality. Margery clung to him, the one dear and precious thing in her world. And Harry held her in arms that would never let her go again, gazed down at her with eyes that spoke of a true and lasting devotion.

"Skyscraper love!" Margery said softly. "Oh, Harry, I never want it again. I want that little house to keep clean and care for, a home to make for you! Nothing could mean more to me."

"That's what we'll have, darling!" He looked down at her tenderly, so close in his arms, so inexpressibly dear. "A little home of our own, out of the city somewhere, with a garden, and green shutters, and curtains at the window, and a sunny kitchen, and you—the dearest girl in the world—waiting for me at night with love in your eyes!"

He kissed her then with all the love of his heart. "Oh, that will be heaven!" Margery cried in a hushed, awed little voice from the depths of his embrace. "Heaven on earth, so long as I have you—and love!"



### YOUR WEEK.

Again, during the next seven days, there are influences that point to social enjoyment, renewed hope, and a mental fortification against the signs of the times. Do not believe everything you hear during the next seven days, unless it is predicated upon a constructive foundation and said with an optimistic note. Our country and our people have been undergoing severe readjustments. Many of you are entering into new fields and starting ventures that are foreign to anything you ever dreamed would happen. We have been the victims of a complacent and self-satisfied stupor for many years, and the reaction has not been pleasant. Unless you make up your mind to shift with the trend of affairs and maintain an attitude of desiring to conform to prevailing circumstances, you are going to be dragging along behind, and will wake up to find you have failed to mount the band wagon of progress and have missed the opportunity your more observant fellow man has grasped. There is a serious undertone to the next seven days, but it would be unfortunate to lose sight of the serious aspect of affairs and be blind to actual values through over-stimulation of your pleasure-seeking instincts.

### DAY BY DAY.

All hours mentioned are Eastern standard time.

**Saturday, April 11th. h** Blend the daily influences with your own influences, if you are mentioned in the

"Sign Guide," and with the weekly trend as set forth in "Your Week." To-day carries irritability and annoying circumstances, but it is active and constructive. Be cautious in your dealings with young people during the morning hours. From six p. m. until midnight is favorable for meeting new people and following unusual lines of activity.

**Sunday,  
April  
12th.**



The morning hours are favorable for the usual Sunday routine. Favorable for writing letters and for serious contemplation, for dealing with older people. The afternoon and evening hours do not carry outstanding indications.

**Monday,  
April  
13th.**



This is not a favorable day if you expect all your affairs to proceed without incident. Do not transact important deals, engage in matters that relate to law, land, loans, or older people. The general trend will be depressing and morbid, but it is an excellent day for sifting everything down to rock bottom. The advice of Polonius in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is excellent for to-day and to-morrow: "Neither a borrower nor a lender

be." From six p. m. until midnight is favorable for ordinary activity.

**Tuesday,  
April  
14th.**

♂

To-day is active and favorable. Good for business and for interviews in the morning, for dealing with women and artistic affairs at ten a. m. and four p. m. Very active and progressive influences are in force around six p. m., and the evening hours are pleasant, active, and constructive, especially around eleven p. m.

**Wednesday,  
April  
15th.**

♀

Yesterday and to-day are both favorable for work, construction, pleasure, entertainment, serious conversation, and dealings with the opposite sex. To-day is active and pleasant, around eleven p. m. especially.

**Thursday,  
April  
16th.**

♀

This is a very constructive but erratic day. Be careful of accident in the evening hours, particularly around six thirty and ten p. m. The afternoon hours are favorable for dealing with law, bankers, and professional people. The dinner hour is very favorable for pleasure and social contact.

**Friday,  
April  
17th.**

♀

To-day is not favorable in many respects. The general trend is for prejudice, stubbornness, problems, and criticism. The specific time when it would be wise to follow routine and avoid anything important is at noon, three, six, and eight p. m. Do not plan important affairs for this evening. General events to-day carry special significance. To-morrow is better.

#### IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—

**March 21st and April 20th**  
(Aries ♈)

—you have a neutral period if you were born after April 15th, except for the general influences for change that are in force throughout the country at this time. Expect activity and utilize your energy for new business, for planning new ventures,

and for building a new structure as a medium for renewed effort, if born between March 24th and 29th. For you who celebrate your birthday between April 4th and 8th, it is a period of change. Your natural tendency will be to destroy everything that touches your life, and you will want to move in the most radical direction to escape existing conditions. Keep calm. Unless there is a cool head at the wheel of the ship during the storm, your ship is at the mercy of the mountainous waves waiting to sweep you overboard. If born between April 11th and 15th, Saturn is responsible for the limiting conditions that are forcing you to conform to routine. There isn't any remedy for this just now, and you might utilize your mental capacity to make plans for the time when you are released from these restraining influences. Folks born between April 1st and 5th should protect their financial interests and should not expect improved money conditions right now. Do not get reckless with the money you have on hand. You'll need it for an emergency within the next thirty days.

**April 20th and May 21st**

(Taurus ♀)

—you are subject to the daily influences as set forth in "Day By Day" if your birthday falls after May 16th of any year. Active and progressive and a time to take advantage of new opportunities if born between May 1st and 8th. For those born between May 2nd and 5th it is a period when they will want to live emotionally and spend their time in pleasure and social activity. You Taurus people lack effort many times and miss good things through your own failure to grasp opportunities. Watch your tempers and your emotions if born between April 23rd and 27th of any year, and follow your intuition instead of impulse. It is a good time for travel, changes, and new business if born between May 5th and 8th.

**May 21st and June 21st**

(Gemini ♊)

—it is a mixed period for you born before June 10th, and unimportant for those born from the 10th to 21st. It is not a favorable time for love affairs or too much consideration of the emotions if born between May 24th and 26th or between June 3rd and 12th. Your perspective on these departments of your life will be distorted during the next week, and you should not

trust your judgment about people right now. A favorable period for aggressive effort and financial benefit through your own efforts if born between June 3rd and 6th, May 24th and 28th, June 1st and 6th, and between June 6th and 10th. This last group may expect favorable changes.

**June 21st and July 21st**  
(Cancer ☽)

—you are under conflicting influences and should note specific dates mentioned below for an understanding of your reactions at this period of your life. If born between June 25th and 29th your days will be active and happy. Depend on your intuition and follow an aggressive program in your affairs. Guard your finances and do not make changes at this time if born between July 7th and 10th, July 14th and 18th.

**July 21st and August 22nd**  
(Leo ☈)

—it is an active and favorable period for those born during the first part of the Leo period, and an uneventful time generally for those born after August 15th. Expect your affairs to improve and opportunities to come your way which you may grasp if born between August 8th and 11th. It is an active and inspirational period if born between July 26th and 30th. Be careful in matters that require sound judgment, and do not execute important contracts, if avoidable, if born between August 1st and 7th.

**August 22nd and September 23rd**  
(Virgo ♍)

—it is a favorable week for you born between August 26th and September 8th. Good financially, emotionally, for business, for writing, selling, and for dealing with the opposite sex if born between September 5th and 8th. Favorable for travel if born between September 1st and 8th. Unsatisfactory for dealing with the opposite sex if born between September 5th and 14th.

**September 23rd and October 22nd**  
(Libra ♎)

—you will have to conform to the trend of the times and make the most of conditions. Wait for the turn in your affairs that will bring improved developments. If born between October 15th and 18th, it is a period of waiting; between October 5th and 8th, it is a time of financial up-

heaval and change; if between October 8th and 11th, you are experiencing trouble in the emotional department of your life and probably feel you cannot stand your partner or your associates to exert further pressure. This latter group will have to take a firm stand and not yield to the impulse to eliminate existing conditions entirely. The Libran people who will find the next seven days active and inspirational are those born between September 26th and 30th; make plans for the future and make each day count for the eventual goal.

**October 22nd and November 21st**  
(Scorpio ♏)

—you are under favorable influences and must make every effort count in your favor. It is a most constructive and stable period for those born between November 14th and 17th; favorable for dealing with older people, real estate, clearing away old conditions, and building your life along a firm trend. Favorable in a social way and for dealing with the opposite sex if born between November 4th and 13th, and excellent for financial accumulation and opportunity if born between November 4th and 7th. For the group born between October 26th and 30th it is an active time when these people will have to guard against being too aggressive and quarrelsome, but they may rely upon their intuition.

**November 21st and December 20th**  
(Sagittarius ♐)

—it is time for business and not for play. Emotional affairs will be very unsatisfactory, and you will have to keep your head clear and not follow any vague ideas, especially if born between November 25th and 27th. Not good for dealing with the opposite sex if born between December 4th and 13th. Concentrate on business if born between November 25th and 29th. Travel, make changes, enter into new lines of endeavor, change locations, and make every opportunity materialize for your own interests if born between December 7th and 10th. Favorable for making plans for the future and getting your material house in order if born between December 14th and 17th.

**December 20th and January 19th**  
(Capricorn ♑)

—it is a time when there will be many readjustments, both mentally and materi-

ally, if born between December 25th and January 11th. If born between January 12th and 15th, take life as you find it during the next seven days, avoid a feeling of futility, and look forward to better and improved conditions. Activity and a more cheerful frame of mind is the program for the next seven days for those born between December 30th and January 5th. If born between January 5th and 8th, expect radical changes that will not be pleasant at this time, but which will work for better results in the future. Very favorable spiritually and inspirationally for you if born between December 25th and 27th.

**January 19th and February 19th**  
(Aquarius ■ )

—your underlying influences are fundamentally good. If born between February 11th and 14th, you may look for stabilization of your affairs; if born between February 4th and 7th, there are opportunities, inventive and original ideas and plans that will bring desired results. Watch your tempers, the signing of papers and contracts, writing of letters, and the faulty spoken word if born between January 29th and February 4th. Do not allow yourself to act rashly if born between January 23rd and 28th.

**February 19th and March 21st**  
(Pisces ♕ )

—there are much better conditions in store for you. You have been under constructive and improved conditions for some few weeks now, after going through many unpleasant experiences for the past few months. A word of advice to you born in this sign. You are too easily influenced, and your natural tendency is to lean on some one else for advice and impetus in your exertion of effort. Stop this. What do you think happens to anything that requires constant support to withstand elemental conditions if the prop is removed? Now is a good time to make a resolution to stand on your own feet, especially for those born between March 13th and 16th. Better in a business way if born between March 6th and 9th. Take precautions against emotional orgies and vague judgments if born between February 22nd and 24th. Life is too practical to view it through rose-colored glasses, especially during this important readjustment phase of our general condition.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Well, M. C., I wish I was poetical enough and had the time to try and answer you in rhyme. That was a clever letter you wrote me, and I enjoyed your flights into poetical fields. So you were

"Born on January, the second day,  
In old town of Lime, where they grow  
good hay.

One thousand eight hundred sixty-nine  
Was the year that I first learned to dine,  
Born between midnight and break of day,  
And ever since then I've wanted my way.  
Always in wrong—always mad,  
Because nobody loved me but my old dad  
And a big brother who died while young.  
If he had lived, I'd have surely sung.  
Love all music—and animals, too.  
If I had my way, I'd run a zoo.  
Now, please tell me, if you can,  
Will I outlive my dear old man?  
He's years older, has had two shocks,  
Has a fiery temper—along with some socks.  
All I want is to know how long  
I can dance a fox-trot and sing a song."

That is very nice, M. C. I do not wonder you have been dwelling upon thoughts of the hereafter and speculating about the length of life. You have been under Saturn's influence, and this planet is of a serious and introspective nature. I want to assure you there is nothing for you to worry about as long as you take ordinary precautions and keep that terrific energy of yours on tap for emergencies. You have strong reserve forces that have pulled you through many difficult situations, and you will come through the periods of change that are in store for you in 1931, particularly during this month and in May. You may take my word for it, 1932 will bring new conditions and happier circumstances. Without your "old man's" birth data I can tell you nothing about him, but your own chart looks long and strong. Furthermore, for the first time in your life, Mercury, the planet of expression through the pen or through word of mouth, is going direct this year, and you will begin to express yourself more. Good luck to you, and write me again.

I want to tell you something, K. M. R.

You have real ability and sense, but you are floundering all over the place. Just because your sister thinks you are crazy doesn't mean that you are. You say you are interested in music and spiritualism and "see" things. Of course you do. The only thing that is the matter is that you have not found the proper channels of expression. You have terrific force, intuition, creative ability, persistence, and, best of all, the influences in your chart show accomplishment through work. Here you are, born March 19, 1908, between seven and seven thirty a. m., and you were twenty-three years old last month—just the time to start thinking about what you are going to do with your life. You have been off on the wrong track and utilizing your strong inspirational forces through every channel but the right one. Forget about the spiritualism! It can bring you only unhappiness and accentuation of the wrong impulses. You will not marry for a few years yet, and you will have trouble finding the right man. Make up your mind to do something with your life. Live a constructive and more normal existence; create, instead of destroying your natural forces. You need training in music or in literary fields, and it is too bad you did not have some one years ago to train you in musical channels. It is not too late, and if I were in your place I certainly would start from to-day on and build myself into the kind of person your intuition dictates and your ability demands. It is up to you, but it would be a pity to waste your life with your possibilities.

You poor dear, Mrs. L. R. G., born February 23, 1910, between eight and ten in the evening, in Arkansas. Your letter was written so sweetly, and I am sure you would like to stop smoking because your husband wants you to do so. Husband born June 26, 1911. Well, Mrs. G., here is the way I feel about that: You married Mr. G. and you have to live with him as harmoniously as possible, and I hesitate to tell you that I think he is unreasonable when he objects to three cigarettes a day. I realize your domestic happiness revolves around this insignificant detail, and if that will make the wheels of your married life run smoothly, you have to make a choice between the cigarettes and connubial bliss. New York would be a bad place for your husband. You cannot go into hotel lobbies, restaurants, or to any theater and fail to note that ninety-nine per cent of the women

are smoking. Your husband would be horribly shocked and would want to return to the West, where men are men and women don't smoke. But perhaps he doesn't object to other women smoking, and perhaps it is because you are his wife that he objects. Cheer up; there are worse things than having to do without cigarettes, and I hope you received the "nice present" on your birthday. Sorry not to have gotten your answer to you before February 23rd; but, if it will help you, your chart shows the will power to do the thing you want to do, but, of course, I'm an old skeptic. I don't believe you really want to stop smoking. Try eating candy instead of smoking; but when you begin to put on flesh from eating candy, Mr. G. won't like that either. And don't think I'm advertising candy, either. Hope you solve the problem, because I know it is serious with you. It takes such little things to break up marriages, sometimes.

So sorry to hear about your mother dying, M. D. C., born July 8, 1897. You do not give your time of birth, but your general influences are not very favorable for the next six months, and it is not the best time in the world to make a change. You would have difficulty selling your apartment to your advantage, and your frame of mind just now might lead you to take a loss where it would not be necessary if you waited until later in the year. You seem to be at loose ends and floundering. You should establish some purpose in your life and build up an interest for yourself. It is a human need to feel lost when anything of importance is removed from our lives, and you must find something to fill the vacant place in your existence. If you want to take a trip, you could go this month, the latter part of May, and in August, as your unfavorable influences would be lessened at these times; but I do not think you should make a complete readjustment until late fall. Stop thinking about what is past and turn your eyes to the future. There is always something waiting for each of us around the corner.

Your chart, J. D. F., born November 17, 1913, twelve twenty a. m., shows adaptability for entertaining and showmanship through your radio-broadcasting work; but your indications for success through composing music are not spectacular, and you would be wiser if you concentrated on your ability as an entertainer. Your influences are unfavorable for marriage this

year, and the November date of the young lady does not blend with your chart.

Thanks so much for your letter, Mrs. E. P. G., born September 10, 1901. Newspaper work is O. K. for you. I shall take up your suggestion that I broadcast for Love Story. I should be glad to have the comments of the readers of this department to see what you think of putting "Your Stars and You" on the air. It is gratifying to have letters like yours and to hear that you feel you owe so much to this department. Write as often as you feel the urge.

Miss M. L., born November 19, 1908, your influences have not been so good for relations with the opposite sex for the past few years, and you may expect this condition to improve as you grow older. Glad you like my sincerity. This star service is to help you folks—not to flatter you. You can get flattery anywhere, but only a friend will tell you the truth.

Continue with your musical studies, C. S., born March 6, 1913. Your chart is most adaptable for your becoming prominently identified with music, as far as I can ascertain without your time of birth. If you want to write me in what branch of music you intend to specialize, and send your time of birth, I shall be glad to answer you more fully in a future issue.

If you had sent me your own birth date, B. F., I could tell you whether or not you could assist your brother with this difficulty. There are times when a combination of planets in two charts will make the two persons helpful to each other. From the data you send of your brother—June 11, 1905, one p. m., Massachusetts—I do not think any one can help him. If he is working in the army stables and has no ambition to do anything else, he will have to arouse this ambition within himself. He has strong mental powers shown in the chart, but he will always present his weakest side to the public.

You are making a mistake to allow yourself to become discouraged, Miss H. S., born April 9, 1914, eleven p. m., in Alabama. Your chart shows musical ability, and you cannot expect to become widely recognized after only three years of study. Accomplishment in artistic fields is slow in materializing, usually. Your influences for 1931 are promoting restlessness

within you and a desire to do everything except the thing you are doing. Dissatisfaction with your progress is a good sign for progress, and instead of being envious of the development of the girls around you, you should study and work all the harder. You have definite indications for change in March, 1932, and this will bring new conditions that will eventually mean success for you. Do not tear down the effort of the past three years, because you will be sorry next year if you have not used 1931 for practice and for perfecting yourself in your chosen profession.

You wish to know, Mrs. M., the best occupation for your son to follow, born January 1, 1914, eight thirty p. m. I suggest you train him for some profession, if possible. I judge from your letter you may find it difficult to handle the necessary financial background that would be necessary for your son in fitting him for professional life. Later in life he will become interested in politics, and the study of law is a splendid foundation for this line of work. If he must start now to earn his living, construction work or a connection with a building firm would be advisable. He has a chart, however, that would enable him to become an excellent lawyer, and I hope you can see a clear way to help him follow this profession.

Mrs. G. W. F., born August 2, 1877, early morning: You may make this change in residence the latter part of this month or the first part of September.

Mrs. R. D., born September 1, 1908, two a. m.; man born May 22, 1898. I hope you have not taken steps to remarry your husband, Mrs. D., before you read this. You would make a mistake, unless you would be reconciled to parting from him again later. Your influences point to difficult conditions through partnership this year, especially in connection with a partner's finances.

Mrs. S. E. B., born June 25, 1910; husband born July 19, 1901. Your husband is not under favorable conditions just at this time, and if you expect to live in harmony, you will have to be understanding and be willing to take the bitter with the sweet. If you are getting on each other's nerves, one of you should try going away for a while. You do not have to get a divorce because there are superficial

annoyances. I believe it is a wise move for husband and wife to go through temporary separations, at least twice each year, because both of the people start over again with a fresher viewpoint. Do not take an impulsive step and discard your marriage entirely, because I am sure it is a case of nerves on both sides, and you need to be apart for a while and think things over.

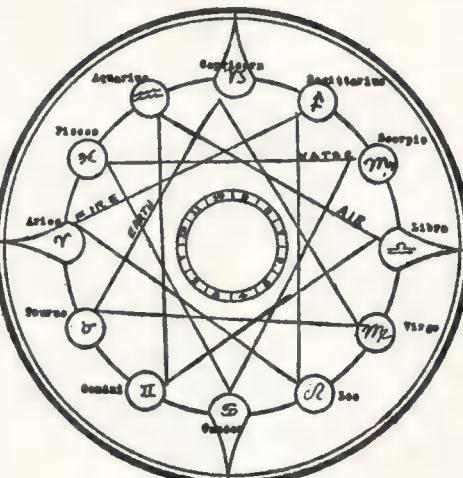
Of course, M. P. W., born December 18, 1915, between one and one thirty a. m., music is everything to you, and don't you think for one minute that I thought you were trying to be funny. You have a good musical chart, too, and it has indications for the ability to compose music. You keep right on with this line, and when you say, "I will finish the thing I am doing," you are dead right. I've had a number of letters this week from musical students and from musicians, and in most of your cases you are on the right path. Yours, Merle, is a good chart for composition, and if you do not get quick results, just keep right on going. The present month is a good one for you, and so are the fall months, beginning with August. Congratulations on winning the scholarship, and all my wishes for the best of luck. Write me often.

Mrs. W. T., born March 12, 1887, eleven p. m., in England, if you read "Your Stars and You" last week, you saw where the week was favorable for you, and the "Sign Guide" this week applies to your birthday, also. Sorry to know you are so unhappily married, but after twenty-one years you should have learned to adjust yourself to conditions. Your chart, Mrs. T., shows unsatisfactory relations with the opposite sex generally, and you must always realize that you cannot expect complete happiness with any man. Changing your dutiful state of mind might help some, however, because I cannot see how concentrating on a sense of duty entirely, with relation to marriage, can bring very much happiness. Conditions in 1932 are greatly improved for you.

I am very glad you wrote to me, Mr. E. S. W., born August 17, 1900, at five a. m., because I am sure I can help you. Your health problem is not organic, and extracting your teeth will not help much. This experience you had of seeing a ball player hurt during a baseball game eleven years ago has left an indelible impression

upon your subconscious mind, and you are just like a shell-shocked soldier. When those who are associated with you tell you it is a cowardly reaction, shut your mind against them, because that is not true. You could not help this feeling that was created by the shock of the accident, and it is the same thing with your nervous system as it would be if you had a scar left after a cut or a gash in your flesh. I think you should go to a psychologist or to a neurologist. I have known a number of cases where the subconscious mind has suffered a shock such as yours had, and it is a simple process for a good psychologist to eliminate long-standing impressions such as you have retained. A good time for you to go for this treatment would be this week, April 16th, 17th, and 18th, or during August, between the 7th and the 13th. I am not familiar with reputable psychologists in your part of the country, but I am sure you will be able to obtain some information about this in Philadelphia, probably from a hospital or from the University of Pennsylvania. Do not worry about your condition any longer, because it can be handled most satisfactorily if you will find the right man. Nineteen-thirty-one is a good year for you, and as soon as your mind is relieved of this nervous reaction, I am sure, you will find a great improvement in your financial situation.

#### FIRE AND WATER.



You do not tell me whether or not the dates you send are your own or some one else's, M. S. But your question is general, and I can see where you may be

confused about the fire-and-water combination. It is not a good idea to make general statements about any point in astrology. While we have laws that embrace the majority of conditions to be found in our existence, the fact that there are contradictory or contributing circumstances must be considered.

It is not a good practice for persons to marry who have strong qualities that oppose one another. You know that water puts out a fire. This same principle applies to a combination between a man and a woman, and usually works out through the watery person limiting the enthusiastic expression of the fiery person.

For instance, suppose you are born under Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius, which is the fire trine, and you are married to, or associated with, a man who is Pisces, Cancer, or Scorpio. You will be enthusiastic, fiery, ambitious, alert, keen for action. The man will be emotional, lacking in enthusiasm, quiet, persistent, and more inclined to view life with calmness, and he will carry on his routine deliberately. Your desire is to flash back and forth across the horizon and leave an impression and often a trail of glory behind you, while he is content to go his own placid way and is willing to wait for recognition. In most cases, he would rather be known as a shrewd business man than go down in history as a hero.

There are exceptions to this rule, of course. When I speak of the fire-and-water tie-up, it is usually with the idea that your Sun is in one group and the Sun of the other person is in a conflicting group. But if you have the Sun in Sagittarius, and your associate has the Moon or several planets in a fire sign, there will be common enthusiasms and a similar outlook upon life. So, you see, it is not possible to take a general rule and apply it to every case.

This same idea applies to the difference in horoscope readings sent out by the scientific astrologer and the astrologer who

sends you form manuscripts. You will receive a general impression of the positions of the planets in your chart and a description of your Sun sign; but the results are quite different from those that accompany a reading or an interview where the delineation is based entirely on the positions of the planets in the heavens at the moment of your own birth. Do not misunderstand me. There is a general knowledge to be gained through consideration of fundamental points in astrological laws, but you must blend the details with the specific positions of the planets in the chart of the individual.

The four qualities of the planets are fire, earth, air, and water. Fire signs are inspirational; earth signs are practical and earthy; air signs are mental, and the airy person's reactions are more on the surface than from within; water signs are emotional, and the reactions of a person with a strong water combination are mainly those based on feeling.

The air and earth signs are not a happy combination, either. The airy group are Aquarians, Geminians, and Librans, and these folks usually go racing from one subject to another and from one occupation to some other interest, and leave the slower moving earthy folks to get there when they can. Reminds me of the story about the tortoise and the hare.

Hope you will not be confused about this in the future, M. S. I try to explain these details to the customers, and in order to understand what I write, you have to follow this department closely. Every answer you read in this department is based upon actual mathematical calculations of your individual chart positions. That is why it is so necessary for all of you to include the necessary data if you want a definite answer to your question. There are other classifications of the signs, such as leading, fixed, and common, and I shall take up an explanation of these qualities in an article in "Your Stars and You" in the near future.

**Editor's Note:** Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine.

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# The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to  
make friends

Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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WHAT girl hasn't felt the lure of the stage? Little Actress was born to it. Now, at the age of sixteen, when most of us are occupied with high-school entertainments and examinations, she is an almost-leading lady in her own right, living in the heart of the theater and its people. She knows the thrill of facing a moving-picture camera, yet she's as real and human as any other American girl, sincere, eager, stretching out her hands to life and friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'd like to correspond with an actress? I'm from a famous theatrical family, and have second lead in a Los Angeles stage play. I've also done work in pictures, and enjoy it immensely. I'm a sixteen-year-old girl, especially fond of skiing and dancing. LITTLE ACTRESS.

A wonderful friend to old people.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wish you'd find some one to write to me, my days are so lonesome and monotonous. I'm a married woman of thirty-three and take care of two old people, a man of ninety-two and a woman of seventy-eight, both blind and helpless. I like embroidery, the radio, and the talkies,

and hope to learn to play the piano. Pals, don't forget me.

FLO OF PORT JEFFERSON.

All set for discussion.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't your Pals write to us? We're interested in everything from nature study to dancing, and can tell thrilling stories of our dad's experiences with the Indians. Whoopee would like to know, "Are all boys the same?" and Whoopee's brother asks the same thing about girls. Pals, what do you think?

WHOOPEE AND HER BROTHER.

Twentieth-century tastes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Texas girl of fifteen, full of pep and ready to be friendly with every one. I like movies, parties, and aviation, and basket ball and volley ball are my favorite sports. Girls, come on and write!

MODERN MARTHA.

A New York aristocrat.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room in your Corner for a jolly, mellow old bachelor of sixty? I'm a retired business man, living in New York, and have traveled all over the world. I love literature, dogs, fishing, and movies, play the piano, cello, and violin, and

try to look on the bright side of things. Who wants to write to me? **OPTIMISTIC.**

Where laws are made.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm making a plea to all Pals who want a real friend and who will be one in return. All I'll tell you is that I'm a girl in my early twenties, especially anxious to hear from Pals in the capital cities of each State, as I live in one myself.

**THE CAPITAL GIRL.**

All for speed.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of eighteen, with black hair and a gypsy complexion, married, but not living with my husband now. I've traveled a lot, and my hobby is motorcycle riding. Pals, if you want to hear about hill climbing, just write to

**MOTOR-CYCLE MARY.**

Sympathy with all ages.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want Pals, no matter how old or young, for I'm a woman who can talk about everything from parties with young folks to quilts with grandmothers. I make a good home for my husband, raise chickens and a garden, and have started a book of pictures and poems to which I want you Pals to contribute. **MALLY Mo.**

A girl who has everything.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just a happy-go-lucky girl of sixteen, with golden-brown hair and big blue eyes, a lover of traveling, acting, and excitement. I think I have the qualities a girl likes to find in a real friend: personality, wealth, and loyalty. Let's get acquainted. **A TAR-HEEL CORRESPONDENT.**

An Ohio housewife.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-four, waiting for Pals from all over the world. I'm married, living in Ohio, but I get lonesome during the day. I promise speedy answers. **MRS. Dor.**

The secret of married happiness.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a woman of thirty-one, feel about twenty, have been married ten years and am still happy, and have two mischievous children. I crossed the Atlantic to get to Canada, am of the "bulldog breed," and like jolly company, loyalty, and true friendship. Pals, am I asking too much? **SINGING SLIM.**

A rising young attorney.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Jewish boy, twenty-two years old, fond of sports and dancing. I work in a law office in Toronto, and would like to hear from boys, especially those living in Detroit. Who's ready for me? **LAW STUDENT.**

She'll write the songs you dance to.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of eighteen, just graduated from high school, and living in the country for my health. I've started a career of song writing, and know all the latest songs. Girls from all over the world, write to me. **A SINGING PAL.**

A heartful of mother love.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, twenty-three years old, and have a darling little adopted boy one year old. I'd love to correspond with all women, especially those with adopted babies.

**LOVING VIRGINIA.**

Put in a through call.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm just a hello girl from the Empire State, asking your help in making friends. I'm seventeen, and would like to hear from girls everywhere, especially telephone operators. Won't some Polish girls write, too? **HELLO HELEN.**

Life never lags for them.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We're three girls who guarantee interesting replies to our Pals. We have participated in dance marathons, and have had many exciting experiences. Girls, get busy and write.

**BOBBY, DOLLY, AND BABE.**

Hotel life from the inside.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy of nineteen, a night clerk in a hotel in Ohio. It's lonesome by myself, and I'd like to be a Pal to as many boys as I could. Who'll start? **V. K.**

A man of the theater.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hope this will attract a carload of mail! I'm a man, nearly six feet tall, have tramped on the road, play a little and sing, and am interested in music and all forms of art. I'm a bit temperamental, and like broad-minded people. Pals, you'll find a real Pal in **J. H. M.**

The thrill of big-city performances.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-two with golden-brown hair and blue eyes. I'm a dancer in a large theater in St. Louis, and hope to hear from all of you.

MISSOURI FLAPPER.

Interesting ancestors.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a lonely plea from a blue-eyed girl in the Bean City. I'm nineteen years old, of Indian descent. I love music, dancing, and the wide, open spaces, and hope especially to hear from girls in the West. TROUBADOUR GIRL.

A Parisian romance.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please find me some Pals? I'm a French bride from Paris, now living in Oregon. I have a little girl of seven, but my husband is away four and five months at a time, and I get lonely. Won't everybody write to me? WAR BRIDE.

She'll see Egypt and the blue Italian skies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-two, interested in everything and expert at nothing. I love to travel, and am now planning a Mediterranean cruise. I want to hear from girls on ranches, in big cities—everywhere they grow. LOU M.

Born to cowgirl life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a sixteen-year-old girl, a New Mexico high-school sophomore, and my main hobby is having a good time. I've lived on a ranch all my life, as my dad is an old-time cowboy, and I can ride broncs, play the guitar, and sing. Girls, send your letters to a real Westerner!

BEULAH OF THE RANCH.

All the fire of old Spain.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a boy of twenty-one, living in Kentucky, and I tap dance over a local radio station and play in an orchestra. I'm Spanish, and love to dance, play golf, and fly. I'd like to hear from all boys, especially those interested in music.

QUERIDA MIA.

The valley of fighting and romance.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a blond married girl, twenty-two, and love fun. I can tell

all about the Rio Grande Valley, as I have lived here nine years. I'd like to hear from every one.

RIO GRANDE GIRL.

A plea in poetry.

DEAR MISS MORRIS:

Please, with a great big capital "P,"  
Won't some Pen Pals write to me?  
From fifteen up to sixty-five,  
Make me glad to be alive.  
I'm peppy, slender, rarely blue.  
An answer I'll send back to you,  
So all get busy with pen and ink;  
Write me a letter, quick as a wink!

BLACK-HAIRED CELIA.

An advanced hobby.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a widow of twenty-two, with a five-year-old son, living in a small city which offers hardly any amusements. My pet activity is riding in airplanes. Won't you Pals, young and old, help cheer me up? A WIDOW OF OHIO.

A place of old-fashioned winters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonesome-enough boy, living in a small Canadian city where the snow is sometimes five feet deep. I've traveled and have been in the theatrical profession since I was fourteen—just fourteen years ago. I'd like especially to hear from boys in the navy or living in seacoast towns.

BLOND JACK.

A girl of two careers.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a twenty-one-year-old girl, a bookkeeper in New London, and I have a studio where I teach dancing after office hours. I'd like to hear from any one in the four corners of the globe.

GINNY OF THE WHALING CITY.

A college-boy traveler.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm writing in the hope of finding some true-blue Pals who'll appreciate genuine friendship. I'm eighteen years old, a student in college. I have lived in New York most of my life although I have been to Europe twice, and have also been a trumper. Boys, write to

MANHATTAN FRANK.

From a Rocky Mountain State.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl way out in Idaho, waiting for Pen Pals. I'm five feet three inches tall, have brown wavy hair and

brown eyes, and enjoy music and sports. Pals everywhere, write to me.

PRIEST RIVER CURLY.

A mysterious section of a mysterious city.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm at present recuperating from an illness, and would like letters to cheer me up. I know many things about the section of our city called the Orient, and ■■■ tell Pals all about it. I'm twenty-two years old, with brown hair and eyes. Everybody welcome!

EDWIN OF CHICAGO.

A girl of ambition.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl nearly twenty-one, an amateur song writer hoping to be a professional. I'm very much interested in musical girls, and my special hobby is listening to the radio. Who'll be my friend?

MIDWEST MUSICIAN.

Used to soothing the sick.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am twenty-seven, ■ male nurse by profession. I'm a blond, deeply interested in music, but can't play a thing. I'll guarantee an answer, if some of you fellows will write to me.

HOSPITAL BOB.

He works in the land of play.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a man of twenty-five, with brown hair and eyes and a ruddy complexion, and for four years I have been with the civil service. I'm a lineman on the telephone gang in Hawaii, and find myself lonesome at times. I'll be grateful for letters from every one.

TELEPHONE BOY.

The world's most glamorous city.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a girl who really wants Pen Pals! Come, all you girls from the West, South, East, and North, and I'll tell all about the wondrous city of New York. It will thrill you, too!

A NEW YORKER.

A native of a distinguished State.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: What young man in this extensive world would like to write to ■ boy from the valley of Virginia? I have dark hair and eyes, am especially interested in aviation, and you'll find me a true friend.

LYNN OF VIRGINIA.

Full of musical energy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to me? I'm a girl in Kansas, and play the trumpet in two bands. I'm interested in drawing, too, but most of all I'm hoping for letters from every one, regardless of ages.

JUST FOURTEEN.

An exciting summer vacation.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married brUNET of eighteen, fond of sports. I travel every summer with a show, and see a lot of the world. I can tell interesting stories, and would like to hear from young and old.

WAURINE.

She'll tell the truth about Scotch thrift.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Canadian girl, living in Baltimore now, a blonde with brown eyes. I've traveled and lived in Scotland, and my parents are Scotch. Would any of you Pen Pals like to hear about that historic country?

KILTS.



# The Friend In Need

## Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



ARE we moderns insane on the subject of love? Insanity is merely the loss of mental balance, the over-emphasis of one idea. And it seems to me that we tend to give an unwholesome emphasis to the idea of love.

Love, of course, is a terribly important part of life; but it certainly is not the whole of it. And when we get to the point where the lack of love is considered enough excuse to break up an otherwise happy home, to make a half orphan out of an innocent child and break the heart of a kind, faithful husband—when we get to that point, we must long since have passed the boundary of sanity.

Here is a letter from a woman of education, a woman of high-sounding ideals. Has that education taught her to make the most of the rest of life, to center her interests in something which can take the place of the love which is denied her?

Apparently not. It has left her as selfish as a spoiled baby, as grasping as the most rapacious miser. If she cannot have love, she is going to throw away everything else that makes life worth living. And then she cries because her unwholesome concentration on love has left her strangely barren.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Maybe I'm cursed with a morbidly romantic mind and am just working myself up into a state of nervous hysteria. My mind simply goes around in a circle. After hours, weeks, months, yes, and years, of thinking, I'm still just where

I started. So at last I have decided to write to you, as I don't feel that I can talk to any one I know. I have the instinct of the wild animal to hide my wounds in solitude, shrinking from curiosity and pity—pity most of all. I don't want any one's sympathy. I could stand anything but that.

I'm twenty-two, and have been married almost four years. I have a little boy who will be two soon. When I married, it wasn't for love, not the kind of love that I had always dreamed about. I liked and respected the man more than any other I knew, and I knew quite a few because I am considered good-looking. I married thinking it the only way out of a very trying difficulty. It was a terrible mistake which never would have happened if I hadn't been so overcome by nervous excitement and fear at the time.

My husband is good-looking; he is intelligent, and he adores me. He is a dear and a thoroughbred. It was wicked of me to marry him. He deserves more than I can ever give him. Pray God he'll find it some day.

Sometimes I tell myself I really love him. I have tried so hard, for he is so good, so splendidly unselfish, head and shoulders above so many men whom I know. Some day he may meet some one as fine as he is. Then he'll wish he wasn't saddled with me.

Is there still sunlight and joy in the world? There must be. I tell myself I must not be like the women I despise, clinging to a dream that has vanished, wearing their sorrow like a garment for all the world to see. If love has passed me by, there must be other things.

But are there? The future doesn't look very bright. I'm not strong and throbibly alive, buoyant with vitality, like I was before I was married. I had a nervous breakdown at the time, and I haven't felt at all like I should since.

If I could have the proper food and sufficient rest, it would do wonders for me. But we are just merely existing, and that is about

all. Times are so bad, sometimes my husband only gets two and three days' work a week. We never have anything left to spend for pleasure or the better things of life.

My life has never been an idle one. I always helped with the work at home, and I'm really not satisfied without something to do. But the daily round of work, which seemed so monotonous then, seems in retrospect to have been strangely full, compared with the emptiness of my present existence. Then there was, at least, the future to make things bearable, glamorous with dreams and the unknown. Now there is nothing. The long, weary days and years are stretched before me, a straight, endless path, with never a glimpse of a turning.

Oh, that the dream of some day loving a man had not been a dream at all, but a reality! How different my life might have been. As it is, my placid existence seems to have undergone some curious upheaval, and I'm always aware of an unusual restlessness, of a vague longing for something intangible.

I don't want to go through life barren of love, without its sweet ecstasies and sorrows. I want to feel all of it, the joy and the pain. How I want to really love a man with all the tender-hearted, passionate force of my nature, love him so much that I would be content to be left on some desert island with him, alone, for years, worship him, adore his every fault, glory in his every defect, simply because he was my man, my mate! Even if he were maimed, I would want to love him with all the intensity that I would shower on him in health.

If I could only love my husband that way, I would be content. But my heart doesn't seem to be a faucet to be turned on at will. I have been away from him as long as a month at a time, and I never seem to miss him or want to be with him. Yet if I really loved him as I should, I know I wouldn't dread coming back to him when I'm away.

And in the mornings, when he goes to work, if I could only watch him go with an ache in my heart just because he is leaving me for a few hours, and count the hours until he returns, then I might think I loved him. Much as he adores me, and good as he is, I must confess it is a relief to see him go.

There are times when, at the very thought of his caresses, the numbness, the paralysis which are so many thousand times worse than pain return to torture me as they did at first.

Don't think I'm shirking my duty as a wife. I'm doing the best I know how, and I always try to meet him with a smile; but it isn't easy. No one can know how hard it

is at times. Yes, I've played the game. He has been happy, is still happy, proudly adoring me almost, reverently adoring his son.

There are times when I can hardly realize that I am really a married woman. For I was so ill at the time, not physically, but mentally—mind and soul—I don't remember a single word of the ceremony. Yet I realize only too well that by that social act I have apparently forfeited all my rights to happiness.

Sometimes I look at my child, my little hostage in the hands of fate, with a bewilderment that holds no bitterness. The baby who has been born to cement the bonds of my marriage, the baby who has succeeded in his purpose. I have my little son and can never leave him for a greater love, even if that love calls me.

But am I right? In the final balance of the ultimate judgment day, will it be proved better that I should go to that love when it calls than remain with my husband and child, the two who have become mine through mistake?

But my little boy, my little baby, flesh of my flesh—oh, I love him so! He's mine; he's not like a thousand other pink-and-gold babies in their cribs. He's not even like any other little boy. He's himself. He knows me. He expects things of me now. He needs training and understanding and me, even though he'll be going away from me some day.

To-night I'm all alone, and I sit before the window looking down upon the sleeping city. But is it sleeping? Or are there other girls, wide-eyed with fear and remorse, also facing the dark. Girls, more hopeless than I, in trouble? At least, they know what it is to love. They haven't been cheated, starved, like I have. For the moment I almost envy them. Surely, it would be better to have tasted life to the dregs than to see it held before your lips and snatched away.

Perhaps this is a madness which has grown on me through fear; fear that life is passing me by entirely. There are times when the last few years of my life seem to have been wasted, they have been so empty, dull, and lonesome. We are all entitled to love and happiness. It is our rightful inheritance. Why should I be excepted?

Mrs. Brown, am I wrong in harboring such dreams and thoughts and worrying over what is and what should have been? Don't my feelings count? I need help; I need strength, firmness of character, and stability.

Should I cast all thought of self aside and live only for others, try to make the lives of others brighter? Should I try to bring a

smile to some sad face, lift a little the burden which presses on another's heart.

Mrs. Brown, won't you please print my letter? It may help some foolish girl to think twice before she enters marriage without love. And please excuse the pencil; it is all I have. Poverty is so terrible, and I do love pretty things. How unfair it seems to be denied everything but work, struggle, worry.

DREAM GIRL.

One might understand all this agonizing if Dream Girl were in love with another man. But to throw away the beauty of what she has for the suppositious happiness she may obtain is—really, it's the only word—stupid.

Compare the hysterical tone of this letter with the calm beauty of Marylin's, which follows. Which of these women would you have chosen for your mother, if the choice had been put to you?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: All those women who fall for the wrong men make me sick. They ask your advice and then say, "Don't tell me to give him up, because I can't."

They know very well that is exactly what they should do. They can give these men up before they let themselves get in too deep if they will only try. I know, because I have been married to one of the best men in the world for eight years, and I never knew what real love was until two years ago.

I met and fell in love with a man ten years my senior. I am twenty-eight, old enough to have a little common sense. The man is one of the best and finest men in the country, but no finer than my husband. He told me that he cares for me, but he isn't a home wrecker, and neither am I.

My husband is thirty-two and thinks that I am perfect. How could I break his confidence and wreck his life? It isn't his fault that I fell for another too late.

I care for my husband in a quiet, sincere way. Maybe that is a safer way, after all.

I am sticking to my home and my baby, and I am getting a lot of quiet pleasure out of knowing I am doing right. I married when I was twenty, and I was engaged six times before I was married. I always broke the engagements, not because I was fickle, but because I was young and found that after a few months I wasn't in love at all.

Let me say to Lucky that I know what she is going through. My dear Lucky, you do think that you are sincerely in love, but so did I each time I was engaged. When you are as old as I am, you will look back

and wonder what it was all about. Wait a while, dear.

Wanting Love, maybe you can find some way to interest your husband. For a while my husband wouldn't come home when he got off from work. There wasn't any other woman, but he liked to hang around in town and talk.

Well, dear, we bought a radio and we write to different stations and ask them to play at certain times for us. We sit down every night and see how many new stations we can get, so we can write to them. We make a real contest of it, and you ought to see my husband come dashing home to make every minute count.

I can't go out much on account of my health, but I'm holding my husband at home because I keep him entertained. I always have something to eat or drink after we put baby to bed. Try my method, Wanting Love. When a beautiful love song is being played, flop onto hubby's lap and feed him candy or titbits. He will soon respond. MARYLIN.

Marylin may not have Dream Girl's ability to pepper her writings with three-syllable words, but she knows a sight more about life than the other ever will. She has far more intelligence, more resourcefulness, than a roomful of Dream Girls, and I'd back her any time in a contest of wits.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I offer a few words of advice to Heartbroken Wife? A few years ago, at nineteen, I faced just such a situation as she faces now—a disappearing husband. We drifted along, he wandering off periodically and I always giving "just one more chance."

Finally, we reached the divorce court. But I still loved him, and for a long time it was a constant fight with myself to keep from going back to it all. My parents were wonderful. For a long time I was sort of lost.

Heartbroken Wife has one big advantage I missed—her son. But one day I found a tiny baby girl who needed some one to love her as badly as I did. I took her home, and in time my parents adopted her. I support her.

Then I learned a profession. Dad lost his position, and for the past three years I have been the main support for mother, dad, and baby.

The funny part is that I saw my ex-husband a short while ago, and, Mrs. Brown, I wouldn't have him back at any price. Now I know I must be able to take pride in and

trust the man I love, and he must be worthy. I have no regrets now. It's just a lesson I had to learn somehow, and perhaps I would not be where I am now without it.

I come home at night tired, but happy in the knowledge that my mother and dad and baby are waiting. When baby puts her little arms around my neck and says, "I love you so much," I don't know of anything much better life can hold.

Mrs. Brown is right, Heartbroken Wife; you can't teach an old dog new tricks. You have all your life ahead of you. Make every minute of it count. Take your boy places with you, enjoy his happiness, and in doing for him and your dad you will soon see how foolish it is to hold onto a man who isn't worthy.

I was once Lonely Kay, but now I may sign myself

CONTENTED KAY.

This isn't a bad letter for Dream Girl to read. Perhaps she will realize that even marriages based on love may be very unsatisfactory if one cannot retain one's self-respect. Love isn't enough; there is more to life than the simple satisfaction of desire.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I really do not know why I am writing this. It can only show you how foolish a girl can be. But here goes.

First I want you to know something about myself. I am twenty-four years old, a little too fat to look well. I have a wonderful home to which I would be proud to bring my friends if I had any. I have a car of my own, money in the bank, and all the clothes a girl could wish for.

I do not drink or smoke, but I don't mind a kiss now and then.

Now, Mrs. Brown, here comes the funny part—well, perhaps not so funny. You can judge for yourself. The only sweethearts I can get are good-for-nothing roughs. Not very nice, but true!

My first sweetheart adored me. He still does, although he is married. I'd been going out with him a month when he was arrested for stealing. He said he was not guilty, but he had to serve three months in prison.

I did not leave him then. I visited him in jail and wrote to him every week.

He always was wonderful to me. He held me so high, he thought I was an angel. I was not, but he thought so. Once, I know, he walked twenty miles on a bitterly cold day to see me, when he had no money for bus fare.

He would work a month, then lose his job.

What I did not like about him was his jealousy. Although he showed it only once, it was terrible.

When he had money he never could buy me enough things. I finally left him. I have met other boys, but he is the one I care for most.

My second sweetheart drank a lot. After I had gone with him a month, he insulted me. I left him. I did not care much for him, anyhow.

Now comes the last and worst of my sweethearts. I started with him a year ago. He worked a week after I met him, and has not worked since. He has treated me terribly, but I still go out with him, for I cannot stand being alone, and no one else seems to want to go out with me.

I know I am a fool to go out with some one who will not work but lives on his married sister's charity, drinks, and runs around with a bad bunch.

Although he says he loves me, I do not think so. He only comes when he has no other place to go. He goes to dances and I stay home.

Once I went to a dance, and he was there. He pretended he did not see me at first, and when he could no longer help seeing me he did not ask me for a dance, but left the hall.

In all the time I've known him he never took me to a dance or a movie or spent a penny on me. We stay at home and he makes love to me. Sometimes he speaks of the day I'll marry him, but I do not think I'll ever be that foolish.

If I only had a nice boy for a sweetheart, how happy I would be!

You may think me simple-minded, but I have dreams of a happy married life with a perfect husband and children whom I'll adore. My dreams may never come true, but I keep on dreaming.

What do you think of me?

NORA.

I could weep when I receive a letter like this. It certainly is an admission of weakness and laziness.

Yes, Nora, laziness.

You've never taken the trouble to go around to places where you'd meet young men of different character. You've never taken one step toward forming the right sort of friendships or making your dreams of meeting some one worth while come true. You've sat around and waited for something to happen, and is it any wonder that the

things which come your way aren't worth having?

Snap out of it, girl; there's time yet for you to overcome the effects of your foolishness. Give this wastrel the boot and join some clubs where you'll meet a better class of people. Open your home to worth-while people; ask them to come to see you, instead of waiting for Heaven to put the notion in their heads.

Then, maybe, some day your dream of a home may come true. Otherwise, it certainly never will.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I answer Lucky? I will try to make this brief, but I must try to shake her out of her complacency.

Let us all agree, Lucky, that you have the world by the tail. I think each person is in that pleasant situation at seventeen years of age.

I suppose you have the general opinion of all youngsters that twenty years is rather aged; senile, in fact. I am twenty and I'm young. When I am fifty I will still be young, even in the fifty-year-olds of to-day are young.

When I was seventeen I fell "hopelessly and fortunately" in love, too. My "one-man affection" did not make me less popular, either. In fact, the boy's own cousin confessed undying love and promised to win the game for the honor of our high school, once, if I would promise to give him one tiny kiss. Most Harold Teenish, wasn't it? My darling was the hero of the hour; so, of course, he received the reward.

Shortly after graduation, after "one year of close contact and companionship," I moved eight hundred miles away. To say I was desolate is putting it mildly. We wrote regularly for three months. At the end of that time the boy friend traveled by way of a collegiate Ford to the town where I was working. He even obtained a position here and stayed for several months, just to be near me.

When college began in the fall he returned home. Another year passed, and we were very true to one another. He refused fraternity dances because I could not be there, and I turned down the nicest boy because of my engagement. I—silly in it now seems—became a recluse because I was engaged.

Another year passes in our drama; the hero returns again to claim the lady fair. But, alas, there is a catch.

It seems that while the hero was away he became narrow-minded about a few things. He either grew selfish during our year of separation or I had been too blind to see it before.

And now, my children, comes the end. Our lady fair told the hero to "go fry a golf ball; you make me tired." Thus ended a happy romance.

Lucky, it would have been tragic if I had married that youth. It was infatuation I felt, not love. My infatuation lasted two years. I am not an insincere, light-headed person. And while we were in love we rode over the waves of many a quarrel.

Now our heroine is waiting true love. I want a man whose principles of living are as clean as my own. I want some one who can provide an income so I may keep house. I want a real man, and some day I shall find one. I'm not going to jump madly into this thing called marriage. I see too many people doing that.

All you young people, take Mrs. Brown's advice. Don't marry before you are twenty-one. You will never regret it, and it may save you much—oh, so much!—sorrow.

Mrs. Brown, why don't you advise these sweet young things who want to wed to go to work? It seems to me that the desire to marry young is caused by too restless hands, too idle days. There is nothing else to do, so the young people want to get married.

Let me add one more little jewel of wisdom. Lucky darling, you say you aren't complaining about your boy friend's selfishness. If you had not been, you would not have mentioned it. And another thing; there ain't no such word as "faithfulest." You're either true or you aren't.

Well, good-by. See you again some time. Don't let any one razz you, Mrs. Brown. If they do, just call on me. YVONNE.

Thanks, Yvonne. I'll remember that offer in my hour of need.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have no troubles or heartaches to bring to you, but just a few words of praise for your very excellent advice.

You are right in advising Lucky to wait and seek other company, for if she loves that boy, waiting will increase that love a hundredfold. Ask me; I know!

I was fifteen and my husband nineteen when we first met. I loved him the moment I set eyes on him. However, I still had a year to go to high school, so, in spite of my sweetheart's pleading, I gave him only one evening a week until I graduated. And

then I made him wait three years after that—that is, my parents made us both wait. During that time I met many interesting men and went out with them, but each date made me appreciate Ted's sweetness and sincerity the more.

So when I was nineteen we were married, and after four years of marriage we ask each other if it's possible for our love to be so perfect. At twenty-three and twenty-seven, with a charming imp of a daughter two years old, we face the world as very happy and lucky people.

The secret? Consideration for one another's tastes and habits, natural affection, very few quarrels, and the resolution never to fall asleep without a good-night kiss, when every petty grievance is forgiven. Try it, girls.

LUCKIEST WIFE.

There you see both sides, Lucky. Both these girls are glad they waited, although one was really in love and one wasn't. Either way, you can't lose.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been married ■ little over ■ year and make only a small salary as an office worker. Due to unemployed periods, I was unable to save anything while single. However, I have worked steadily since I married.

About six months ago my wife's father got out of work in another city. Being a carpenter, he has never had steady employment, and when he lost his job six months ago he was practically destitute.

My wife secured relief jobs in our city which helped ■ little, and I gave her six and seven dollars a week to send her people. It was every cent I could spare. In fact, our clothes became threadbare, and we ate only the cheapest foods.

My wife finally could get no work at all, and my money wouldn't pay her people's expenses, as they have three small children. Their rent fell considerably in arrears, and they faced eviction. My wife, being idle, worried all day long. She ■■■■■ desperate.

A few days ago she told me she was going to visit her people, and I gave her my last dime for train fare.

I have learned since that while on her trip she permitted men to pick her up, and she strung them along for whatever she could get from them. She gave the money to her mother to pay the rent.

She has returned to me. I am hurt pretty badly, and I don't think I could ever love her again.

It seems unjust for me to have to go

through the rest of my life with a woman whom I could never love again.

I am so upset that I am not capable of reasoning the matter out myself, ■■■■■ I come to you. I hate to make her leave; she would have to go to her home in all its destitution. Bear in mind that she loves me very much.

SOUTHERNER.

In the first place, Southerner, how did you find out? Are you sure you haven't been listening to unfounded gossip? There are malicious tattlers who will distort the most innocent actions until they make a very ugly story.

Even if you do know the story is actually, unquestionably true, don't decide too hastily. Wait until you've had time to cool off before you make your final decision.

There are two sides to this question. Your wife showed an undeniably beautiful loyalty to her parents in doing something so distasteful to any good woman for their sakes. But was it really necessary?

There are facilities for the relief of the unemployed to which her people could have gone. It would have been far less shameful to ask for and accept charity than for her to do what she did. It was the action of a loyal but either unintelligent or ignorant daughter.

What do you other readers think Southerner should do? Do you men think he ought to overlook what his wife did because her motives were good? Do you women think you'd have done the same thing in her place?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have just finished reading Dissatisfied's letter, and I just had to write and tell you about myself. I was exactly as Dissatisfied describes; that is, before I met the man I am now about to marry.

I could not go with a fellow longer than two months without getting that peculiar feeling. I'd want them to leave, and if they attempted to, I would want them back.

Now I am engaged to be married. When I first met Bill, I knew I loved him. Then after ■■■■■ while I imagined I was tired of him and wanted him to go.

One night I attempted to make him break off. He acted as though he did not care.

When I saw that, I changed immediately and wouldn't let him go.

I read Dissatisfied's letter to him, and he said: "Darling, that night when we were about to break up, I acted the way I did because you were too sure of my love. I knew that was why you acted the way you did. When you thought that I didn't care, you changed.

"That is just the trouble with Dissatisfied," he said. "I think she is too sure of her husband's love. If she could imagine him in some one else's arms and home, perhaps she would lose that restless feeling."

I hope Dissatisfied reads this letter and then tries to conquer that terrible feeling which might in time cause her unhappiness. I'm glad Bill helped me get over my fickleness.

A BRIDE-TO-BE.

Bill's a very bright boy. I'm sure he'll always know how to handle any domestic disturbance.

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Chadwick L. B., of Boston—sometimes known as "Mike"—your friend, C. E. F. E., of Jersey City, whom you met through this magazine, has misplaced your address, and having tried very hard to locate you, without success, tries this method as a last resort. If this comes to your attention, please write him, either directly or through me. A Bad Girl: If you want people to believe that you do want to be good, why not try showing them that you can be? Anxious: I guess it's all right if you don't begin to get romantic.

Smiler: You were right, of course. It's no use trying to hold a man who doesn't care. Lonesome: I think you'd better wait a few years before you think of such things. Reds: If the things you think are disagreeable, why not keep

them to yourself? There's no law compelling you to say disagreeable things, even if they are true. Look for friends rather than one friend. You'll have a greater chance for success.

Beautiful: Tell him you'll let the boss know if he keeps on annoying you. That should stop him. Couldn't you get your parents to let you invite young people you meet through the church to your home? Bewildered: You're foolish not to make other boy friends. Do you want her leavings? Lonely: I'm sure you can find happiness again. Go about where you can meet single young men about your age. Troubled Sixteen: Give him a chance to make good. If it's not successful, you can have it dissolved, but the baby will be protected.

In Distress: The more friends you have the better off you'll be, so it can't do any harm for you to make other friends. Mary of Fall River: Tell the sister you've met some one you want to go with, and you can't help make up the foursome any more. Have you ever tried making friends through such institutions as the "Y" or your church? I think it would help solve your problem.

Dot: If you can't hold him without lowering your ideals, he's not worth while. Besides, even if he were the Prince of Wales, you'd be better off without a steady at your age. Babe: Kid him out of his jealous fits before they get too strong. Unhappy Toots: He's rude and unfair. Why bother with him any more? Impatient Blonde: What do you gain by going away? You lose both things that way.

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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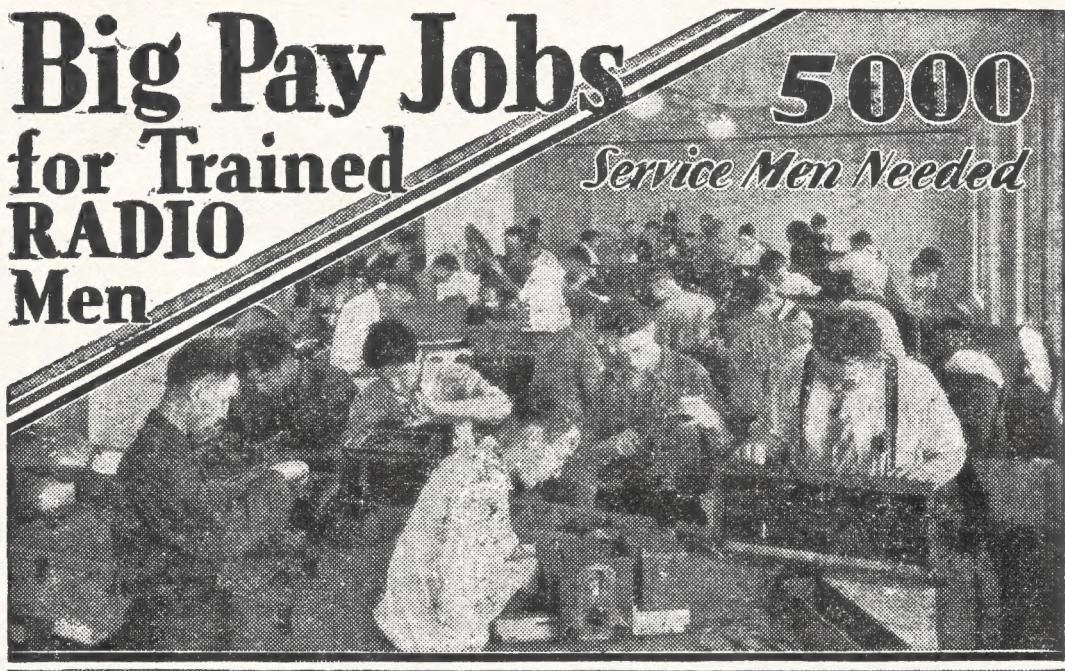
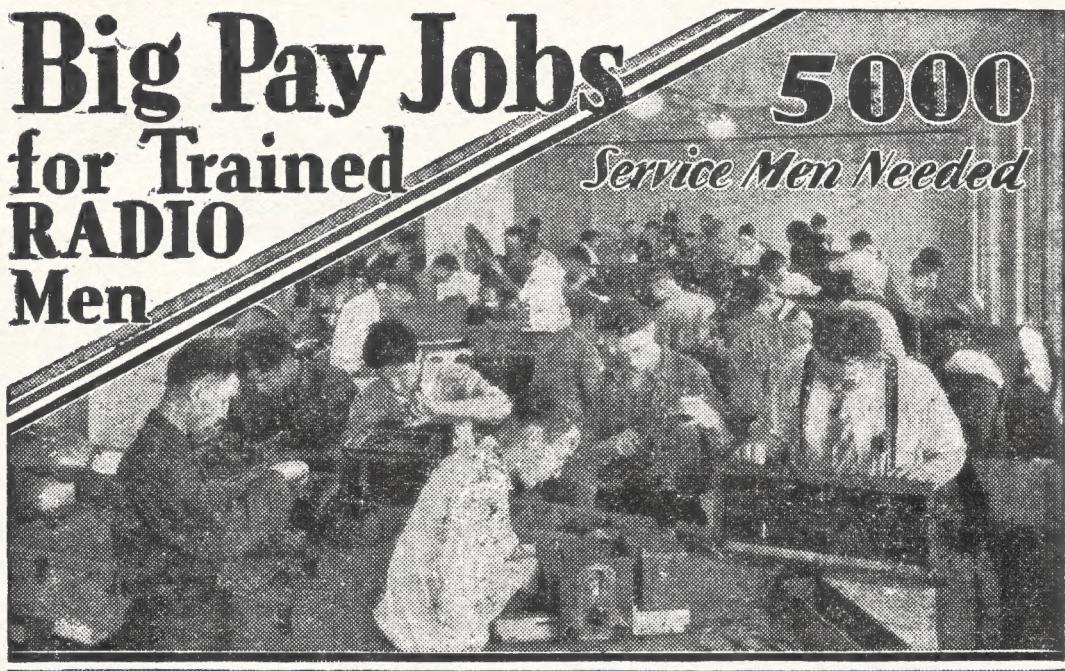
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A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE

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Would \$72 a week take away your worry about bills? Would \$10, \$12, \$15 a day smooth the way for you? Then listen to me, my friend. I have something of importance to say to you. I know of hundreds of men and women who were once in the same position you may be in today—men out of a job—widows with children to support—honest, conscientious people who needed more money to keep things going. Did they give up? Not on your life! I'll tell you what they did. They accepted a wonderful opportunity to make money—more money than they ever made in their life before—the very same offer I'm ready to make to you right now.

#### **Bills All Paid—And Money in the Bank**

H. T. Lester, of Massachusetts, is one of them. And this is what he writes me: "My bank book shows that in 25 days I deposited \$100.35—that is, over and above my living expenses." Think of it! Bills all paid and over \$100 clear cash in the bank in less than a month. Mrs. Edgar Crouthamel, of Pennsylvania, is another. She got \$89.72 for one week's work. And then there is G. W. Tubbs, of California. He was out of a job for three months. But he accepted my offer and now often makes as much as \$20 in one day. Are these people worrying about bills? And I could mention hundreds of others just like them to show you the amazing possibilities of my proposition.

#### **You Don't Need Capital or Experience**

Is there any reason why you can't do as well? Let me tell you why I think you can. I do business in every section of the country. I



need people everywhere to help me. And I have a place for you right now in your very locality. You don't have to invest any capital. You don't need any special training or experience. Mrs. Frank Young, Minnesota, was formerly an office worker, making \$50 a month. Now, she is a widow with two children. Yet, with my proposition she often makes as much as \$25 in a single day. Henry W. Yeager, of Minnesota, didn't have any experience either. But he had bills to pay and needed money. With the opportunity I gave him he made a profit of \$17 one Saturday afternoon.

#### **Korenblit Makes \$110 a Week**

I'll tell you, as I told them, the few simple things you need to do. I'll furnish everything you need to have. And you'll be your own boss—work when you please. You couldn't imagine finer, more delightful work that pays such big money for the time you devote. Maybe a few extra dollars a week would help you. I'll be surprised if you don't make \$25 to \$35 a week in spare time. L. R. Solo-

mon, Pennsylvania, cleared \$29 in four hours. Or, maybe you'd like steady, year-round work, with a chance to have an income of \$72 a week. Sol Korenblit, New York, does better than that. He says he averages \$110 a week regularly. Whatever you want, here's your opportunity to get it.

#### **Send No Money—Just Mail Coupon**

Let's stop worrying about bills. Let's get them paid—quick. Then, let's get money ahead; have the things you need and want; enjoy life. I'm ready to give you the chance. I'm ready to make you the very same offer that has brought \$15 and more in a day to literally thousands of people. You don't need to wait for anything. You can start making money right away. I don't care who you are or where you live, it's worth your while to find out about this amazing offer. Mail the coupon and I'll give you facts that will open your eyes. And you don't obligate yourself or risk one penny. You have everything to gain. So don't wait. Mail the coupon—NOW.

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Albert Mills, President

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Name .....

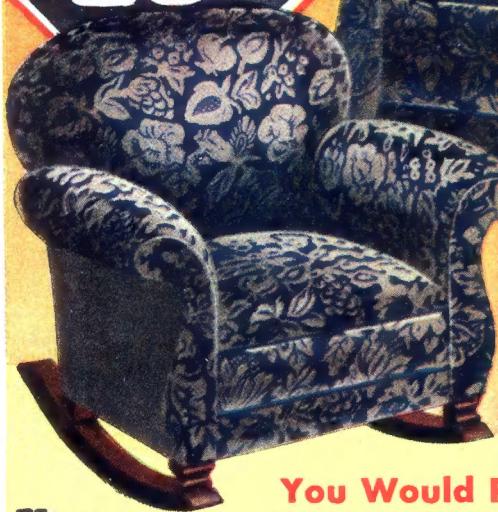
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